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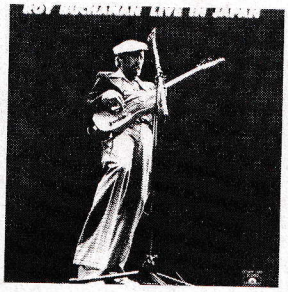

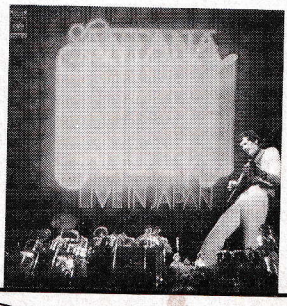

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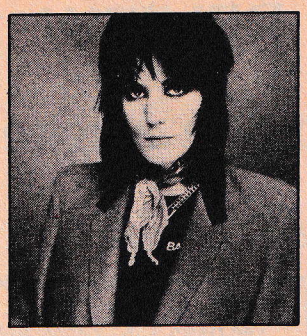

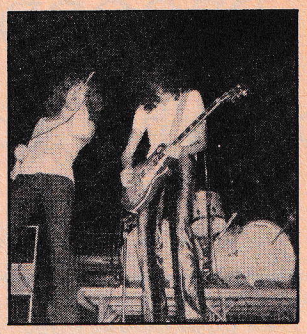

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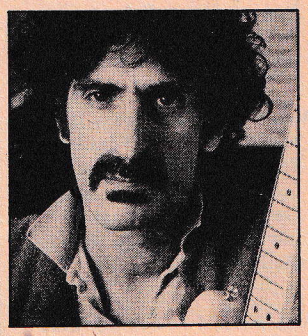

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RECORD REVIEW

VOL. 6 NO. 3 JUNE 1982

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Letters

International Dept...

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for a fantastic magazine. In your February issue the interviews with Jon Anderson and Robert Fripp were brilliant, the questions were very good (thanks Steven Rosen). It was very good to have two such interviews in the same issue. Your magazine gets better all the time, keep up the great work. I would like to have letters from people all over the world who like Yes, Genesis, PFM, King Crimson, etc.

Jan Anders Sandholm
Ovre Hallegatan 52
417 13 Gothenburg
SWEDEN

Dear Editor:

I am writing to you to tell you how mad I get when I see a band like Devo get as far as they have. I've been a Ramones freak for six years and always will be, but when the subject comes up about Devo I always get into an argument. When listening to a Ramones album then trying to listen to a Devo album I can't see how anyone can overlook Rock n Roll for what Devo fans call music. I would like anyone who does not like Devo and lives for Rock n Roll to write back! Thanks for a great magazine RECORD REVIEW.

Craig O'Donell
12 Maple Crescent Ermington
Sydney AUSTRALIA 2115

Dear Editor:

I started buying your magazine when I saw Ozzy Osbourne on the cover, that was a super article you had on him. If you do another interview with him, will you ask him if he would like to give a concert in Denmark. There's hardly ever any good rock bands playing around here. I think RECORD REVIEW is the best rock magazine, I especially would like to thank Jon Sutherland for his great interviews. I would like to write with other Ozzy fans. I'm 18 and I also like Foreigner, Journey, April Wine, etc.

Lise Blom
Rugmarken 30
6000 Kolding
DENMARK

Jon Anderson...

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for the excellent article on Jon Anderson in the February issue. It was one of the best interviews I have read on Jon Anderson and with beautiful photos. It was very satisfactory to read about Jon Anderson since Yes broke up.

Steven Rosen had some good questions that I would have asked Mr. Anderson myself. I am hoping that the band, Yes, will decide to regroup because I really miss them. I am looking forward to reading more about Jon Anderson and Yes and hopefully in RECORD REVIEW.

Kathy Jou
Belleville IL

T Bolin/G Moore...

Dear Editor:

I had to write and tell you thanks for a fine informative magazine. There are two main reasons I'm writing you and they are about two great guitarists. I would really like to see a retrospective on Tommy Bolin, since you do such a nice job in that part of RECORD REVIEW. The other guitarist is Gary Moore whose work with Cozy Powell, Thin Lizzy, and others is to be praised very much.

Please keep up the good work!

Tim Mikol
Northfield OH 44067

Various Heavy Metal...

Dear Editor:

What can I possibly say! Michael Schenker, Iron Maiden, Sabbath and Ozzy, they were all great articles in your recent issues of RECORD REVIEW.

Your magazine is, without a doubt, the best Heavy Metal magazine in the world and I've read alot of them. You can't top the stories I've read so far, but how about trying with stories on Tygers of Pan Tang, Riot, Motorhead, Saxon, or other less commercial Heavy Metal groups. Thanks a bunch and keep up the great work. Heavy Metal fans write soon.

Jeff Rue
521 E. North Street
Jefferson WI 53549

Sad News Re: Ozzy...

Dear Editor:

I would like you to publish this letter about the late, great guitarist Randy Rhoads.

We have lost a great musician and friend. The death of the great guitarist Randy Rhoads is being felt by Rock n Roll fans everywhere. His talent was obvious and his potential unlimited. I only hope that Ozzy decides to continue without him. I know that Randy would want him to do that. After all, we can't let his memory die, he was just too great.

Putting his death in perspective, I would like to thank him for two outrageous albums and many great concerts. R.I.P. Randy, you'll never be forgotten.

Danny Vesper
Roselle NJ

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

Bits & Pieces

By Jon Sutherland

That'll be the day... When the **Pretenders** rocked the Pauley Pavilion on Valentine's Day they had a special guest. Headbangers may cringe but joining the band for a heady version of the Troggs' "Wild Thing" was none other than the brilliant silver-stringer **Edward Van Halen**. A quite unlikely pairing, **Van Halen** and **Chrissie Hynde** both do share an affection for the Kinks' **Ray Davies**. Van Halen's interest may be more musical, as the Pretenders' songsmith and the master of the concept album and sophisticated survival on the rock and roll scene (Mr. Davies) are an international item. RECORD REVIEW's clutch photog Donna Santisi caught the moment...

The original booking of **ZZ Top** and **Thin Lizzy** seemed like one of the oddest pairings in years. I was all set to scarf a dozen enchiladas and wash them down with Guinness getting ready the day of the show when Thin Lizzy pulled off the bill. Turns out the pride of Eire and the winners of the 1978 *Melody Maker* poll for the album of the year (*Live and Dangerous*) wanted more time to get the details together. Things do look good for Lizzy lovers, though. The band will come over on its own tour supporting their strongest studio album since *Jailbreak*. **Snowy White**, who toured with **Pink Floyd** on The Wall tour and did some great guitar on the **Peter Green** solo album *In the Skies,* is heading towards record status as Scott Gorhmam's guitar partner. So far he's lasted two successive albums. That's one up on **Gary Moore**... By the way, the low point of this column is that I don't have any news on Mr. G-Force himself. As he's a personal favorite and enigmatic wonder on the rock scene, I am always on the look out for any Gary Moore news, and if you'll notice, in any of my feature interviews I do have one stock question that comes up, and that's always a comment on Mr. Moore...

AC/DC news... Grinding out a knee-skinning, blistering, cannon-blasting tour, the spokesmen for bad boy boogie crunched the masses with Angus' healthy screaming guitar a cause for celebration. The 1982 AC/DC stage show was as clean as the band has ever been with precision lighting and the standard bun-hanging and running through the crowd. Over the holidays, in selected markets, the wunderkind Aussies were presented live on film in *Let There Be Rock*, featuring the late great feather-voiced **Bon Scott** on stage in Paris. The film played only for a week to qualify for Academy Awards nomination (what, for the best B.A.?) and will be re-released nationwide later in the spring. Hopefully none of the record company executives will stall and this live version of rock's premier gutter poet, Bon Scott, will hit the screens so the masses who got into the band after his death will catch a glimpse of his magic...

Darlene Love, lead singer of the Chrystals, is joining the legions of early 'Sixties rock stars to try the 'Eighties for what it's worth. Love is following Del Shannon, Gary U.S. Bonds, James Brown, Lou Christie, and others for another time around. I'll tell you one thing, many years ago I spent my lunch money on "He's A Rebel" and from what I've heard lately, Darlene still sounds good.

Photo By Donna Santisi

A respected source of information and absolute monster rock fanatic **Mister Varney** has some good news for rock's faithful. Varney, the producer of the underground sensation *U.S. Metal* and total metal mailingerer, has pulled off a coup that it may take him a couple of weeks to match. He has signed one of the greatest guitarists of our time to a record deal. **Allan Holdsworth**, who is held in high esteem and mentioned as personal favorite by none other than **Eddie Van Halen, Alex Lifeson** of **Rush**,

SOULBROTHER NUMBER ONE: and the greatest dancer of all time—jump back Muhhamad, showed the faithful that he still has things in his bag that no one else does. At the Country Club in Reseda, James Brown showed some of his old stuff and some of his new, all of which was timeless.

Photo By Donna Santisi

and **Neil Schon** of **Journey**, has put together an album that will be available on Riff Records. The album is called *Allan Holdsworth's I.O.U.* and features **Paul Williams**, formerly of Tempest, on lead vocals, and a killer 19-year-old drummer as yet unidentified. Those interested can write Allan Holdsworth at P.O. Box P., Novato, CA 94948...(And check these pages for a feature interview with Holdsworth about his days with Tempest and UK, soon.)...

Mister Varney is also putting together a second version of *U.S. Metal* that outruns the first in songsmithing and soloing, and he still is slashing the throat of his own ax. Look for the producer Mister Varney to surface as a metal songsmith on his own with the help of **Alexis T. Angel**, formerly of **Ozz**.

Remember **Ulrich Roth**, the man who replaced Michael Schenker in Scorpions and was so heavy on the *Tokyo Tapes*? He's busy working on his third solo album . . . **Randy Hansen**, who was so promoted and so dropped by Capitol Records, is trying to rise from the ashes and is putting together a new band.

Jethro Tull is looking for outside production after the guest appearance of **Eddie Jobson** and has called on **Paul Samwell-Smith** (the original Yardbirds' bass player and producer of the Cat Stevens classics) for his expertise on their new album, *Broadsword and the Beast*.

The **Michael Schenker Group** is in ruins and his double album *Live from Budokan* will not be released for recording his follow-up to *Don't Say No*. The song remains the same, sorry...it will be the same players. **Iron Maiden** will follow *Killers* as their third full length Lp will be on the streets by the time you read this . . . (There are two Ep's available in Japan and a slew of unreleased B-sides of English singles including the band's only cover song, **Montrose**'s "Paper Money"). Extra added news, you can almost buy all of the members of **Def Leppard** a drink. Half the band is hitting the magic 21...

Whatever happened to **Bad Company**? . . . **Paul Rodgers** has recently gotten married to lady who hails from my alma mater and is successfully reproducing. Hopefully he will expend such energy to stretch the lungs that begat heavy metal singers onto some vinyl quick...As **Adrian Smith** of **Iron Maiden** says, you can only wear out so many copies of *Free Live*. By the way, **Mick Ralphs** is spinning the dials producing **Maggie Bell's Midnight Flyer** instead of finger-fretting. Maybe the **Mott The Hoople** reunion stuff we hear is for real...Now wouldn't that be a kick in the arse!

Meanwhile down on E Street the Beeg Man **Clarence Clemons** made his L.A. debut. Originally he had decided to take his big sax down the road apiece along the East Coast. The response was so heavy that West Coast dates were added. At the Roxy in Los Angeles, Clarence spiced his timeless brew with oldies, goodies and a few jams. The show was a showcase for the **Reb-Bank Rockers**. For an encore the versatile **Robin Williams** did a pantomime of shucking and jiving to an instrumental version of "Tenth Avenue Freezeout." His Baptist preacher's chant promised to take the audience "down to the river"

Steve Winwood, who's *Arc of a Diver* sold tons and made one of rock's most respected and talented a legend years after he already was one never took his second solo album (*Arc*) on the road as he said he would. Instead he is holding up at his own studio finishing number three. It's due for a late summer release if all goes well.

SOULBROTHER NUMBER ONE: and the greatest dancer of all time—jump back Muhhamad, showed the faithful that he still has things in his bag that no one else does. At the Country Club in Reseda, James Brown showed some of his old stuff and some of his new, all of which was timeless.

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and **Neil Schon** of **Journey**, has put together an album that will be available on Riff Records. The album is called *Allan Holdsworth's I.O.U.* and features **Paul Williams**, formerly of Tempest, on lead vocals, and a killer 19-year-old drummer as yet unidentified. Those interested can write Allan Holdsworth at P.O. Box P., Novato, CA 94948...(And check these pages for a feature interview with Holdsworth about his days with Tempest and UK, soon.)...

Mister Varney is also putting together a second version of *U.S. Metal* that outruns the first in songsmithing and soloing, and he still is slashing the throat of his own ax. Look for the producer Mister Varney to surface as a metal songsmith on his own with the help of **Alexis T. Angel**, formerly of **Ozz**.

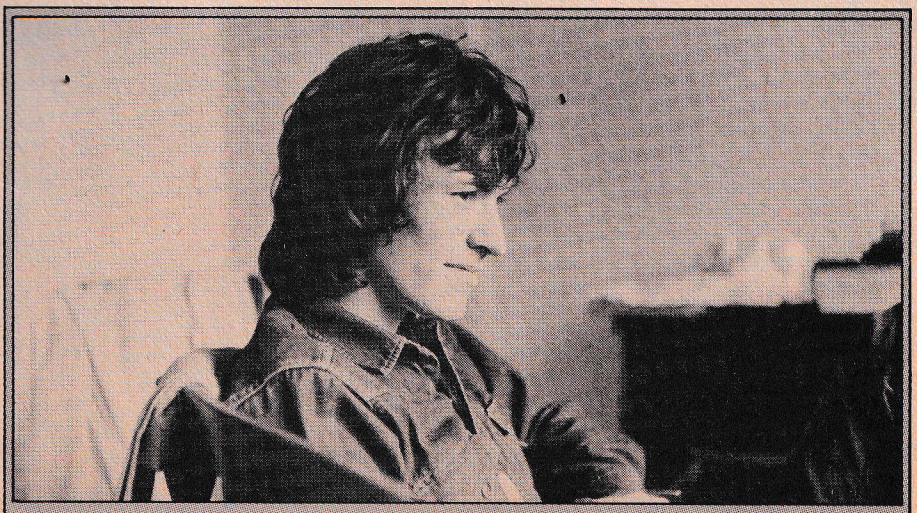
Remember **Ulrich Roth**, the man who replaced Michael Schenker in Scorpions and was so heavy on the *Tokyo Tapes*? He's busy working on his third solo album . . . **Randy Hansen**, who was so promoted and so dropped by Capitol Records, is trying to rise from the ashes and is putting together a new band.

Jethro Tull is looking for outside production after the guest appearance of **Eddie Jobson** and has called on **Paul Samwell-Smith** (the original Yardbirds' bass player and producer of the Cat Stevens classics) for his expertise on their new album, *Broadsword and the Beast*.

The **Michael Schenker Group** is in ruins and his double album *Live from Budokan* will not be released for recording his follow-up to *Don't Say No*. The song remains the same, sorry...it will be the same players. **Iron Maiden** will follow *Killers* as their third full length Lp will be on the streets by the time you read this . . . (There are two Ep's available in Japan and a slew of unreleased B-sides of English singles including the band's only cover song, **Montrose**'s "Paper Money"). Extra added news, you can almost buy all of the members of **Def Leppard** a drink. Half the band is hitting the magic 21...

Whatever happened to **Bad Company**? . . . **Paul Rodgers** has recently gotten married to lady who hails from my alma mater and is successfully reproducing. Hopefully he will expend such energy to stretch the lungs that begat heavy metal singers onto some vinyl quick...As **Adrian Smith** of **Iron Maiden** says, you can only wear out so many copies of *Free Live*. By the way, **Mick Ralphs** is spinning the dials producing **Maggie Bell's Midnight Flyer** instead of finger-fretting. Maybe the **Mott The Hoople** reunion stuff we hear is for real...Now wouldn't that be a kick in the arse!

Meanwhile down on E Street the Beeg Man **Clarence Clemons** made his L.A. debut. Originally he had decided to take his big sax down the road apiece along the East Coast. The response was so heavy that West Coast dates were added. At the Roxy in Los Angeles, Clarence spiced his timeless brew with oldies, goodies and a few jams. The show was a showcase for the **Reb-Bank Rockers**. For an encore the versatile **Robin Williams** did a pantomime of shucking and jiving to an instrumental version of "Tenth Avenue Freezeout." His Baptist preacher's chant promised to take the audience "down to the river"



Steve Winwood, who's *Arc of a Diver* sold tons and made one of rock's most respected and talented a legend years after he already was one never took his second solo album (*Arc*) on the road as he said he would. Instead he is holding up at his own studio finishing number three. It's due for a late summer release if all goes well.

because they were "born to run." Needless to say Bruce was a no show but **Miami Steve Van Zant** was seen heading for On The Rox. Springsteen fever was running rampant even if "The Boss" was out of town.

Phil Collins of Genesis has been keeping himself busy by producing **Abba**-lovely albums. The import of the new **Genesis** single from Abacab "Man On A Corner" has a B-side which is unreleased (available as an English import) and is called "Submarine." The next **Genesis** album will be a double album with three sides live and one studio side.

Brownie, I mean **Blondie**, is in the studio with Mike Chapman working on a new album...

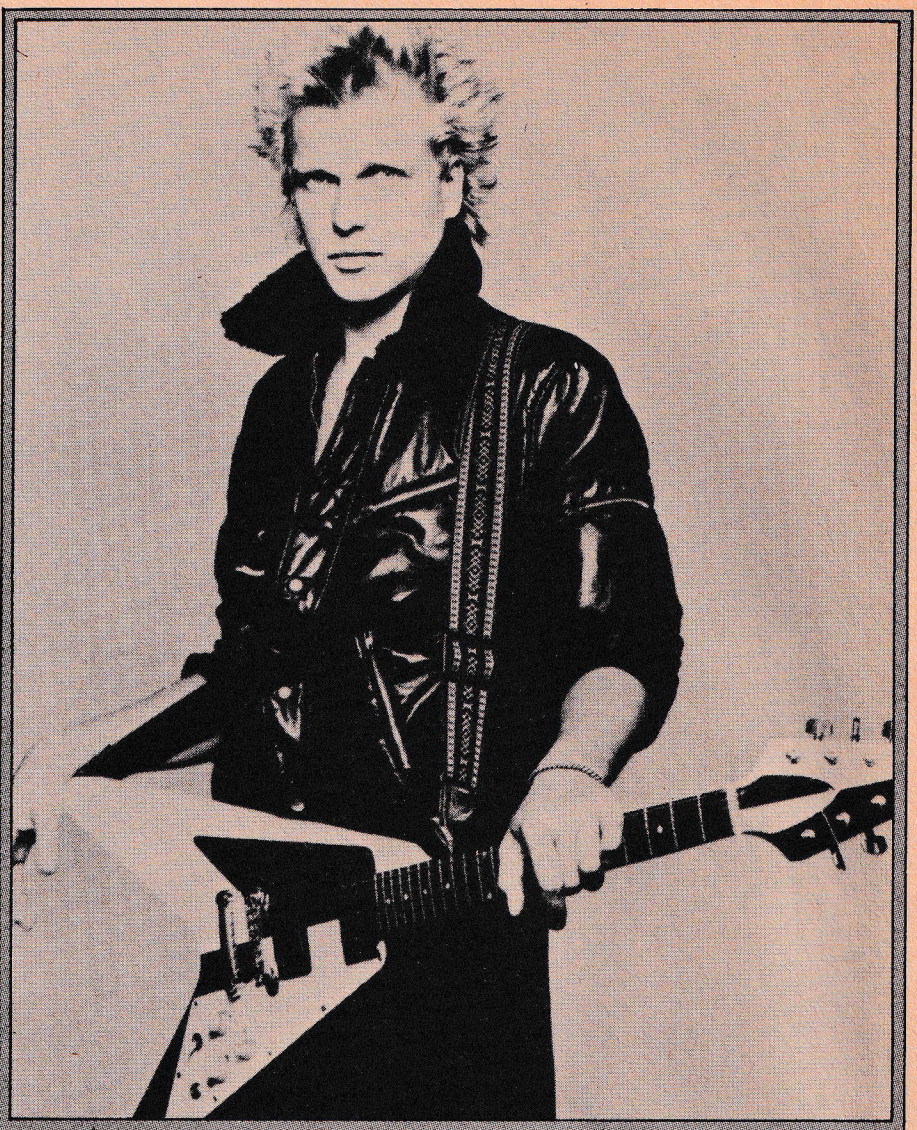
Now in Motown, the biggest news this side of the Superbowl Sunday is the **Temptations** reunion. The original four Temps, **David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks, Melvin Franklin**, and **Otis Williams** will be joining the current Temps, **Dennis Edwards, Glenn Leonard**, and **Richard Street** for a studio Lp, a national tour and a live Lp from that tour. Producing various tunes will be legends **Berry Gordy, Smokey Robinson**, and **Rick James.**

Trouble in Paradise...Derek Sutton, **Styx**'s manager on their ride to platinum plastic success, was given the boot for reasons unknown to him after six years of service. So much for loyalty. The **Stray Cats**, English rockabilly wonders, have signed with EMI and will release an album stateside that will be culled from the band's first two English Lp's...**Terry Bozzio**'s (of Frank Zappa and UK fame) **Missing Persons** is finishing an Ep for Capitol Records and should be out when you read this. **Jimmy Iovine**, who's worked with **Dire Straights, Stevie Nicks**, and **Tom Petty** is producing **Bob Seger**'s new album, *The Distance*...

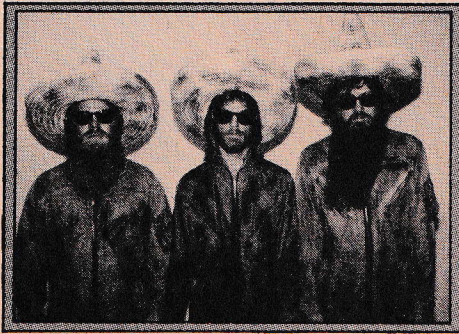
News Item...The **Knack** is no longer! Precipitated by the failure of their third album, *Round Trip*, **Doug Feiger**, lead singer and the owner of the band's name, has left to pursue a solo career, leaving the remaining three members to form a new group, **The Game**. They've added a new lead singer, **Stephan McNally** (referred to them by Flo & Eddie) and made their part time Knack keyboardist **Phil Jost** a permanent member of the new band. The Game is currently rehearsing and making demo tapes in Los Angeles, with several record labels interested in signing the group. Their music has been described as being like Foreigner, ballsier and heavier than the Knack ever was.

Meanwhile, lonely Doug is also working with new musicians on demos, hoping to put out an album before the year's end. You can expect Feiger to be the only one who will continue to do the old Knack songs. RECORD REVIEW hopes to do interviews with all the participants of this break-up in the near future.

Mark Knopfler, one of the most tasteful guitarists currently sucking O-Two is producing the next **Dire Straights** album. The not totally pickless wonder (he still has the classy Pick Withers and John Illsley with him) expects the sultans of swing's slab to be in the vinyl racks by October 1st. Meanwhile he is working on a soundtrack for the new John Forsythe



HAVE FLYING V WILL TRAVEL—Perhaps you know me. My name is Michael Schenker. You may heard me in the Scorpions, but certainly you've heard "Doctor Doctor," "Too Hot To Handle," and "Lights Out In London" from my days in UFO. I was interviewed here in RECORD REVIEW right after I formed the Michael Schenker Group. There I told of my evil ways and the evil days. Now I have two MSG studio albums and a double live Japanese album for you die-hards in search of the ultimate metal solo. I have almost fired everyone in the band to see if I can get second place in the Ritchie Blackmore musical vampire sweepstakes. But before you go check out my new lead singer Graham Bonnet.



Would you buy a pair of cheap sunglasses from these guys? ZZ Top did a swing through the U.S. and missed several strategic spots going to Europe instead where the Texas look was the rage. Now confessing they are making up for the neglected ones (like me) who missed the Loco Tour of 1981. Now the raging question is when Billy Gibbon's beard will reach his Les Paul. Odds from Las Vegas say it will be sometime late in 1983.

movie...Speaking of soundtracks, the legendary **Jimmy Page** is making his first appearance since Led Zeppelin's decision to disband after the death of Thumper **John Bonham** by writing twelve songs for the very discreet **Death Wish II**. Wouldn't make sense for Page, with all the Satanic overtones, to get involved in a project so violently aimed at the foreheads of the Moral Majority. Now that the ice is broken maybe we can see the rest of the **Zeps** getting untracked and doing what they do best...

I know I harp on it too much but until **Michael Schenker** gets his gig together and puts all of the pieces together it will be a rollercoaster for the fans of his guitar style. Recently **Graham Bonnet**, lately of **Rainbow** and other English metal projects, has joined forces with the remains of **MSG**. Maybe this will be a step in the right direction for the enigmatic German.

Billy Squier and band are working hard on a follow-up to the double platinum *Don't Say No*. The recording will be split between New York and Germany and should be ready for release in June. Also grinding out the tracks of a new album are **Steve Tyler** and **Aerosmith** with the familiar **Jack Douglas** at the controls...

Headbangers beware: the term "headbanger," popular among heavy metal fans, was taken all too seriously by a young rock fan in England who while attending a **Saxon** concert shook his head so violently that he had a brain hemorrhage and died...**Van Halen** is climbing out of a slump with the release of the **Roy Orbison** cover "Pretty Woman." *Fair Warning* was disappointing on the sales charts and hopefully the new album due in May or June will do beter...

In the solo album derby, **Clarence Clemons** of the **E Street Band, Christine McVie** of **Fleetwood Mac, Buck Dharma** of **Blue Oyster Cult, Ray Manzarek** of **Doors**- and **X**-producing fame are all putting together albums...

Wishbone Ash, the founders of the dual lead guitar and twin harmony guitars with **Ted Turner** and **Andy Powell** getting together in England in 1969 have called it quits after twelve albums. Their most notable album, *Argus*, was voted album of the year in the 1972 *Melody Maker* poll and helped inspire countless bands who now use the double guitar harmony lines, most notably **Thin Lizzy** and a lot of the Southern bands. *Hot Ash* is the last testament and features a lot of great guitar work between **Laurie Wisefield** and **Andy Powell**...

Missing in action, **John Hiatt** has finally signed with Geffen Records after quite a while of searching for a record deal. His newest album is produced by **Tony Visconti** who has really gotten a thick sound from **Thin Lizzy, David Bowie**, and **T Rex. Greg Kihn** has finished his new studio Lp *Kihntinued*, which includes nine new tunes and a cover of **Jackie Wilson**'s "Higher and Higher."

Graham Parker has finally surfaced after a couple of years away finishing a follow-up to *Empty Lives* while his old band the Rumour has gone every which way. **Martin Belmont** has kept himself busy working with **Garland Jeffries** and **Nick Lowe**...

SECOND TO last place in the Fleetwood Mac solo Lp derby—Christine McVie has only beat John McVie to working on a solo album. Peter Green, Danny Kirwan, Jeremy Spencer, Mick Fleetwood, Bob Welch, Stevie Nicks, and Lindsey Buckingham have all beat her to it.

THE GREAT PRETENDER—During the encore of the Pretenders' Valentine Day Show none other than the most fretful of all rock guitarists mister Edward Van Halen invaded the premises to help out on "Wild Thing." Maybe this is a peace offering between the heavy metal freaks and the new wavers but whatever the circumstances please keep Eddie turned up loud.

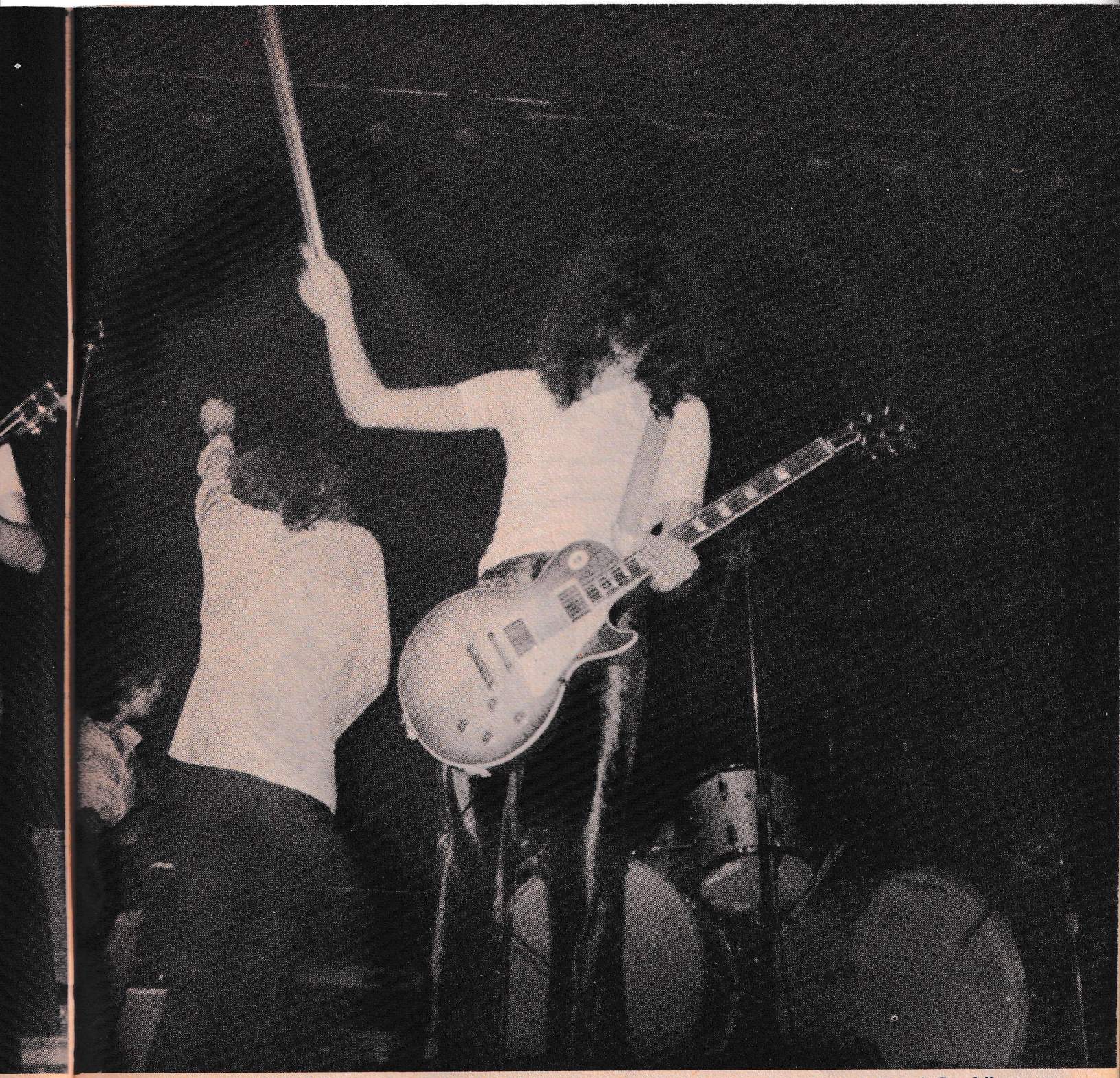
Photos from Led Zeppelin's 1968-1969 First American Tour.

THE LED ZEPPELIN STORY

PART TWO

BY STEVEN ROSEN

"The key to Zeppelin's longevity has been change."



Photos by Dave Jeffress

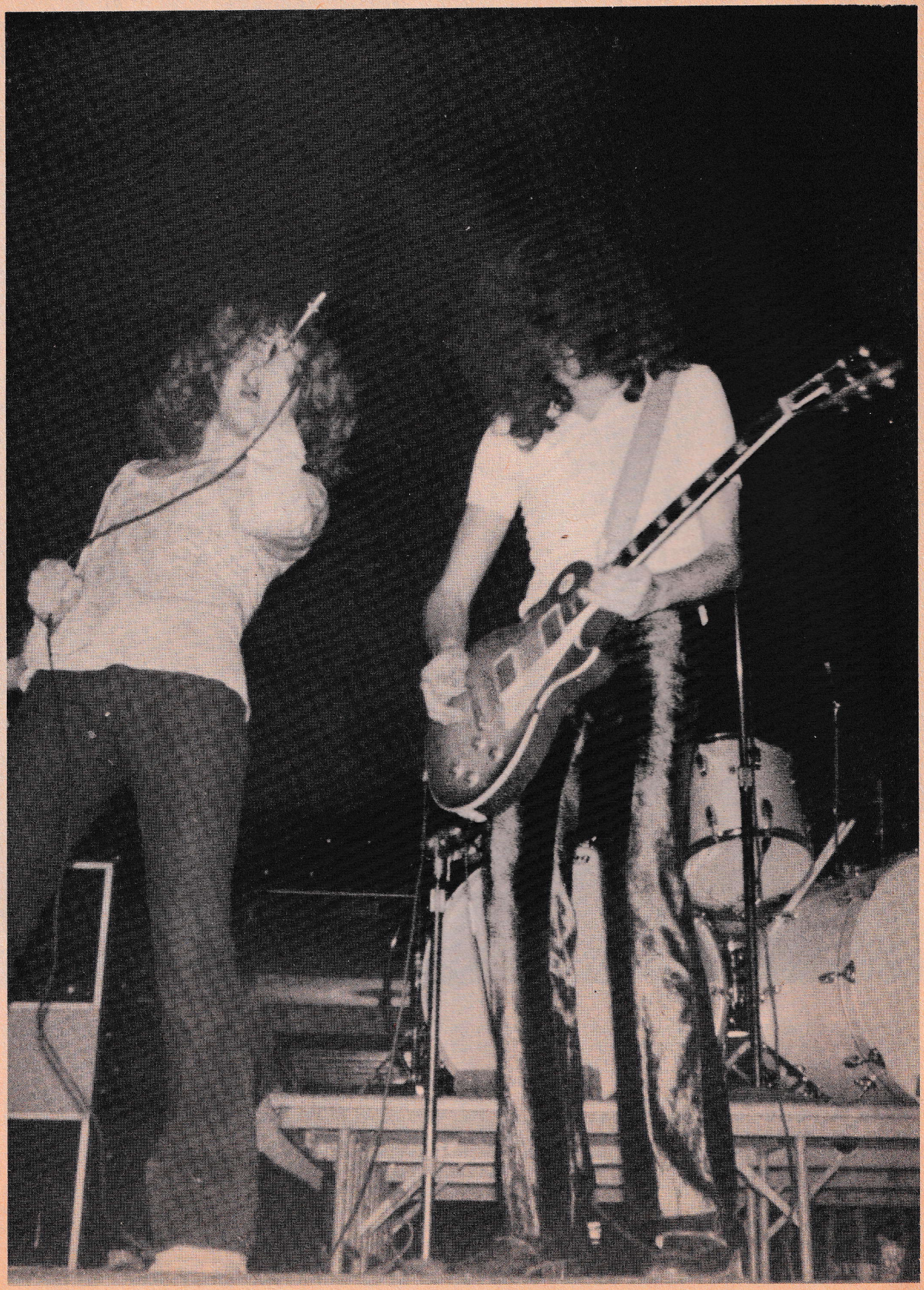
In this second part of the Led Zeppelin retrospective, we will continue from the band's fifth album, *Houses of the Holy*, and run through until the band's current situation (still nebulous) is defined. However, we will first retrace the band's history to this point and bring out some new information not as yet revealed.

Led Zeppelin was without a doubt the brainchild of guitarist Jimmy Page, a player who cut his teeth with the likes of Neil Christian and the Crusaders and later as a session musician with names like Burt Bacharach and Johnny Dankworth. Page's first sessions were with Jet Harris and Tony Meehan on "Diamonds" and with Carter Lewis on "Your Momma's Out of Town."

During this period Page began experimenting with feedback and distortion and while many claim Jeff Beck was the first to harness these forms of guitar treatments, others point to Page, Pete Townshend, and John Lennon (listen to the opening bars of "I Feel Fine"). He began working with Who and Kinks producer Shel Talmy and quite naturally worked on many records by these two groups.

Page grew out of this period of session work, which included an album titled *Painter Man* by Creation which featured violin-bowing on guitar (he later perfected this style), and eventually joined the Yardbirds. The band originated as a blues group but found itself performing commercials for Coca Cola and Yardley's and appearing in an MGM film titled *Blow Up* (both Beck and Page are captured on film).

In September of 1966, the band toured with The Rolling Stones, Ike and Tina Turner, and Peter Jay and the New Jaywalkers featuring Terry Reid, a singer Page would later look up. After some disappointing single releases, the band was



growing uneasy and broke up. Page took the group name and ultimately recruited vocalist Robert Plant, drummer John Bonham, and bassist/keyboardist John Paul Jones.

Jones, like Page, had been schooled in the recording studio. John Paul began working with Mickie Most and his early sessions included "Everything I Touch Turns to Tears" by Barry St. John and the Cherokees' "Land of 1000 Dances." Similarly he did a substantial amount of work with Herman's Hermits, Lulu, Dave Berry, Shirley Bassey, Barry Ryan, Cliff Richard, Kathy Kirby, and others.

Singer Robert Plant was destined to be a chartered accountant until his involvement with several Birmingham-based bands—The Band of Joy, Tennessee Teens, Crawling King Snakes, Black Snake Moan, and the Delta Blues Band—swept him away.

Page first heard drummer John Bonham in Tim Rose's backing band but it wasn't until he actually went and saw Bonham in The Band of Joy that he realized his real potential. John was also involved in other outfits such as The Way of Life, Steve Brett and the Mavericks, Terry and the Spiders, and Crawling King Snakes.

The quartet, changing their name from the New Yardbirds to Led Zeppelin, were signed to Atlantic Records. *Led Zeppelin*, the band's first recording, entered the American charts at number 98 and in six months reached the Top 5. It captured perfectly the aggression of Page's guitar and the majesty of Plant's voice (though Plant's live performances were usually dismal) and made this album, in this writer's mind, their best ever.

They followed with *Led Zeppelin II* which climbed to the top of American, English, and European charts and in America Atlantic Records issued an abridged version of the cut "Whole Lotta Love." At this point the band vowed never to issue a single in England.

In 1970 the band set out on an English tour titled "In Person, Led Zeppelin," which included dates in Birmingham and at the London Royal Albert Hall (January 9). John Paul Jones was now playing Hammond organ in the live show and in February the band set off on tour again. A date in Singapore was cancelled because of objections to the length of the band's hair and during a date in Copenhagen the group temporarily changed its name to The Nobs because Countess Eva Von Zeppelin didn't want them using her family name.

After an appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival they travelled to America and toured for one month. Now big business in America—they sold over one million copies of the "Whole Lotta Love" single here—they returned to England to begin work on a third album.

They retreated to Bron-Y-Aur, a small cottage in Snowdonia, where amidst the Welsh mountains, the band rehearsed and experimented with what was to become *Led Zeppelin III*. They entered the Headley Grange recording studios (the album was mixed, oddly enough, in Memphis, Tennessee) and the result was an album of uneven folkish music. The album, however, sold well worldwide and riding on its success the band toured the Far East and appeared for the first time in Japan.

Returning to England, they undertook a tour of the smaller clubs in and around London and began working on their fourth—and what was to be a pivotal —album. In their new stage show the band featured "Stairway To Heaven," a majestic song which featured Page on a Gibson 6 and 12-string guitar. The group moved the tour to Europe and in Milan's Vigorelli Stadium, a crowd of 15,000 fans were attacked by police and Italian soldiers. Batons and tear gas were rampant and the band was forced to retreat to its dressing room for safety. The band returned to America to the largest crowds ever and back in England set up a tour titled "Electric Magic" which featured circus animals as well as support acts like Home, Bronco, and Stone the Crows featuring vocalist Maggie Bell (now with Midnight Flyer).

This tour coincided with the release of the fourth album, characteristically referred to as the Runes Album. Initially these symbols were believed to have been ancient Icelandic runes but in reality they were simply symbols chosen by the band. The three interlocking circles were Bonham's symbol, the feather in the circle belong to Plant, the circle and three fish shapes was Jones' and the remaining calligraphic symbol was conjured by Page. The album took up where the first and second albums left off, sporting some of the band's strongest playing, arranging, and production. There is little filler here and on "The Battle of Evermore," Plant and the late Sandy Denny team up for some very moving vocals.

The group returned to live performance and in February and March of 1972 they struck out for New Zealand and a second tour of Australia. During this same year Atlantic released an album titled *The New Age of Atlantic* which featured "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do," a track not featured on any Zeppelin record.

Again the band toured America, Japan, and Europe and at the end of March released their fifth album called *Houses of the Holy*. This album hearkens back to the band's third when they tried to infuse acoustic and dreamier types of music with their basic electric hard rock fare. It is an uneven album and except for the closing moments of "The Ocean" and "The Song Remains the Same," which truly exhibited the potential of Page's double neck playing, this is an outing of valleys with very few peaks. This was the first album to feature printed lyrics and unfortunately we are subjected to Plant's (he is the chief lyricist) rather banal and flowery outlook on life.

In fairness to the band, it must be noted that from the outset the group, particularly Page, had more than a passing interest in acoustic music. There were non-electric numbers on all preceeding albums but they were tracked and recorded in such a way as to still give the impression that the album was for all intents and purposes an electric album. As Page once explained to another reporter, "The key to Zeppelin's longevity has been change. We put out our first Lp, then a second one that was nothing like the first, then a third Lp totally different from them and on it went. I know why we got a lot of bad press on our albums. People couldn't understand, a lot of reviewers couldn't understand why we put out an Lp like *Zeppelin II* then followed it up with *III* with 'That's the Way' and acoustic numbers like that on it. They just couldn't understand it. The fact was that Robert and I had gone away to Bron-Y-Aur cottage in Wales and started writing songs. Christ, that was the material we had, so we used it. It was nothing like 'We got to do some heavy rock & roll because that's what our image demands...' Album-wise, it usually takes a year for people to catch up with what we're doing."

Following the release of *Houses of the Holy* the band again made preparations for a tour of America which would encompass 33 cities and require the services of Showco Productions of Texas, a special effects company supplying stage effects like dry ice, mirror balls, back-projected mirrors, and mammoth lighting rigs. The group for the first time chartered its own plane, a converted Boeing 720B Starship One jet, originally housing 138 seats and after transformation, 40. The luxury liner contained bedrooms, bathrooms, showers, club rooms, video machines, marble fireplaces, and an electric organ. The band logo was stenciled on the side of the plane in bronze and gold.

The tour was divided into two sections to allow the group to return home for a short break and on their return on May 5,

they played before 56,000 in Tampa Stadium and grossed $309,000, a figure which would place them in the Guiness Book of Records for largest concert attendance and largest concert gross (previously held by the Beatles at Shea Stadium in 1965).

The group, feeling the time was right, hired a film crew under the auspices of directors Joe Massot and Peter Clifton and put on celluloid three concerts held in July at New York's Madison Square Gardens. After receiving gold records for *Houses of the Holy* following this series of concerts, the band returned home to work on what would become individual "fantasy" sequences in the film.

In January and February of 1974 the band spent time working on its sixth album. This would be the group's first double recording, as they had stockpiled material not included on earlier releases. During this same period Page, Plant, and Bonham were joined by Ronnie Lane, Max Middleton (keyboardist with Jeff Beck), and the late Keith Moon on stage at Roy Harper's Valentine Concert. The band too financed the filming of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* along with manager Peter Grant, Pink Floyd, and the Charisma label. And most importantly the group, with help from manager Grant and Atlantic Records president Ahmet Ertegun, put in motion the wheels for forming their own record company. To be called Swan Song, the label logo was inspired by William Rimner's painting *Evening, Fall of Day*. As Robert Plant explained to another journalist:

"The people involved with us who will be on the label, Maggie Bell, The Pretty Things, Bad Company, except Paul Rodgers who was big before with Free, were all with record companies that didn't do very much for them. We're going to try and pull it off for them, and that's what this record company means to me."

And Page explained to another writer:

"Listen, give us time with Swan Song. You'll be surprised. We've got some pretty good things lined up. We're executives and all that crap, but I'll tell you one thing, the label was never—right from the top—Led Zeppelin records. It's designed to bring in other groups and promote acts that have had raw deals in the past. It's a vehicle for them and not for us to just make a few extra pennies over the top. That's the cynical way of looking at a record company."

To launch the label, the group threw parties in New York and Los Angeles attracting the likes of the late Groucho Marx, Bryan Ferry, Micky Dolenz, Bill Wyman, and the band itself. The first album released of the newly organized label was *Bad Company*, an album and band of the same name sporting former Free members Paul Rodgers and Simon Kirke, ex-Mott the Hoople guitarist Mick Ralphs, and late of King Crimson bassist/vocalist Boz Burrell. The album reached Number One in the American charts.

In January of 1975, the band played some warm-up dates in Europe preparatory to an American tour which began on January 18 and ran through until March 27. It was during this tour Page damaged a finger in a train door. During a mid-tour break *Physical Graffiti* was released with a cover which was one of the most costly ever produced. Finally the band was able to recapture moments it had not had since their first two releases. "Custard Pie," "Trampled Underfoot," "Kashmir," and "Ten Years Gone" are all mesmerizing tracks.

In July of 1975, while on holiday on the Greek island of Rhodes, Robert Plant and family were seriously injured when their rented car hurtled into a tree. Plant's wife was treated for a fractured pelvis and a suspected fractured skull while Plant himself suffered multiple fractures of the ankle and elbow. His children, in the back of the car, sustained only minor injuries.

Recorded in just eighteen days, *Presence* lacked the sweep of *Physical Graffiti* and the earthiness of the Runes Album but there are moments where Page's unique guitar-combining artistry comes to the fore. On "Achilles' Last Stand" is a wonderful example of this. By the end of April, 1976, just weeks after its release, *Presence* topped charts worldwide.

In America, Jimmy and Robert joined Bad Company on state at the Inglewood Forum for their encore of "I Just Wanna Make Love To You." Plant also travelled to the Cardiff Rock Festival to watch the Pretty Things perform and during this period, Page, with his love of rockabilly music, signed Dave Edmunds to the Swan Song label.

The film, *The Song Remains the Same*, was released in October of 1976, and like most cinematic documentaries of rock bands it's basically unexciting. Intersplicing live footage with individual dream sequences—Plant a Viking, John Paul a night rider, Bonham a racer, and Page as Merlin—the film was financed by the band and had originally been recorded in 4-track stereo to be shown only at select theaters but public demand caused the film to be shown in most standard movie houses.

An album of the same name was released and except for this live version of "Stairway to Heaven" the tracks exhibit little of the magic of the originals.

In January of 1977 the band embarked on yet another American tour, touring this time in a custom 727 jet. An April 28th date in Cleveland was unofficially recorded and appeared as a four-album box set entitled *Destroyer* while a Los Angeles show was heralded as *For Badge Holders Only* which featured Keith Moon guesting on drums for "Moby Dick."

On Saturday, April 30th, Zeppelin set a new world's record for the largest paid attendance at a single-artist performance. Drawing 76,229 people to the Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan, they grossed $792,361.50 for the evening, beating the previous record held by the Who, whose gross was $604,952.

It was during this tour Plant learned of the serious illness of his five-year-old son, Karac. The child was rushed to the hospital with an enteritis-type infection on Tuesday, July 26, but was pronounced dead on arrival. Many, suspecting the breakup of the band, read Page's message to the press:

"After the tragedy that Robert experienced, he needs time to be alone with his family. Zeppelin's so close that no one person within the band would think twice about that situation. There is no question of splitting up. I know Robert wants to work again, and he'll start working again at his own pace."

The band began rehearsing again and Plant was seem jamming with local bands. John Paul Jones and John Bonham performed at a session at Abbey Road Studios with Paul McCartney, Dave Gilmour (Pink Floyd), Pete Townshend, and Hank Marvin (Shadows). As 1978 drew to a close the band visited Abba's recording studio, Polar, in Stockholm and were so taken in by the atmosphere that they decided to settle in for some recording.

In Through the Out Door was released on August 20th, 1979, bearing a brown outer sleeve and two inner sleeves, the first depicting a bar scene in sepia, and the second a black and white sketch. There were six different bar scenes produced (many hardcore fans bought all six versions) and by mid-September the album was Number One both in American and European charts. It was an interesting album; "All My Love" was an extension of "Stairway to Heaven" and the sheer production quality of the album is superb. John Paul was highlighted more than ever before. His synthesizer textures are colorful and imaginative.

Which brings us up-to-date in terms of the recorded history of Led Zeppelin. The death of John Bonham on Thursday, September 25, 1980, ended what was one of the few remaining English acts still in original formation. Bonham, after an initial post mortem, was to believed to have died from natural causes. A second autopsy reported that he died from a massive overdose of vodka and orange juice during a 12-hour drinking binge. Pathologist Edmund Hemstead said the alcohol had waterlogged his lungs and killed him.

Rex King, Bonham's personal assistant and chauffeur said the drummer began drinking on September 24th and had had about four or five quadruple measures of vodka and orange there. He carried on drinking while at band rehearsal and around midnight fell asleep. When the band's road manager went to John's room he checked the drummer's pulse, and called a doctor who pronounced him dead. The coroner recorded a verdict of "accidental death."

There was immediate speculation as to whom would replace Bonham and names like Aynsley Dunbar, Cozy Powell, Simon Kirke, Peter Criss, Carmine Appice, and others were mentioned. On Thursday, December 4th, Zeppelin and its management issued this message: "We wish it to be known that the loss of our dear friend and the deep respect we have for his family, together with the sense of undivided harmony felt by ourselves and our manager, have lead us to decide that we could not continue as we were."

The band Led Zeppelin as we have known it is gone. In their time, which spanned over a decade, their albums and tours were awaited with baited breath. Jimmy Page as a producer/composer/musician has few equals. There are rumblings of solo outings from both Page and Plant but as yet there is no confirmation. Other rumors include a "new" Led Zeppelin line-up with drummer Alan White and bassist Chris Squire, formerly from Yes, along with John Paul on keyboards, Page on guitar, and Plant on vocals. Again no word on this.

This writer had the pleasure of touring with the band and the magic they created was undeniable. Save for some misunderstandings with certain members of the group...another time and another story . . . it represented one of the highlights of this journalist's career. For those of you who saw the band live, you too experienced this magic. For those of you who never saw the band in concert, their records are testament to this brilliance.

Jett To The Promised Land

The Joan Jett Interview By Jeff Tamarkin

Photos by Donna Santisi

JOAN JETT AND THE BLACKHEARTS

Conversation With A Jett Age Rocker

RECORD REVIEW: When you were introduced during your live show, the line was: "On screams and guitar, Joan Jett." Aside from being a funny comment on new wave vocals, was there any other reason you wrote your intro that way?

Joan Jett: Not really, it's just another way of emphasizing the emotion in what I do. I try to scream only where it does the most good—where it pushes the song *way out there*.

Who's in your band?

Right now, The Blackhearts are Gary Ryan, bass; Lee Crystal, drums; and Ricky Byrd, guitar.

Are they all players you knew from The Runaways days?

No, I advertised.

Advertised? Where?

Put an ad in one of the L.A. freebies. A lot of people showed up, but I was looking for a certain way of playing, a certain style, a certain look, and a really hard sound.

Well, you got *that* all right.

Thank you. It had to be hard—I hate clean-sounding guitars. I want mine to *rip*!

Right. You guys are like buzzsaws (Joan grins) but it's really tightly controlled. It's controlled frenzy. (Joan grins again.) Tell me about your influences.

Well, I grew up with rock 'n' roll. Some people were raised on Wonder Bread. Not me. For me, it was rock 'n' roll. I'd have a towel over my wet hair in the morning, with my headphones on underneath all the time I was putting on my makeup. Then, when I got a little older, I saw that rock 'n' roll is sex, and sex is rock 'n' roll. So my music has everything of that in it.

You also have a certain British element to some of your songs, but a particular kind of British sound: like the Slade or Gary Glitter sound, especially on "Do You Want to Touch Me?" which is a Glitter song. How would you describe what's going on in that sound?

Well, some of it comes from the percussive effects—using echo on the drums, having the drumbeats carry the melody. But some of it has to do with British soccer fans and their fanaticism. See, they make up all sorts of chanting to use during the matches. So lots of Brits know all about the different chants, including musicians and kids. So, when somebody like Gary Glitter comes along and writes songs based on those chants, British fans know what's going on in the songs and often, U.S. music fans don't.

So you have to pump up the emotional level even more over in this country?

Yeah. But that's the fun of it. My favorite thing is to be up on the stage, singing with all I've got. I hope it never ends.

So you're not using rock as a stepping stone to a political career?

No way!

—Gerald Laurence

LONG ISLAND, N.Y., SUMMER, 1981 Joan Jett wanted a sandwich. A roast beef sandwich.

So she walked across the street to get one. There wasn't much happening in the studio anyway. Kenny Laguna and Ritchie Cordell, her producers, were busy mixing a drum part for "Bits And Pieces," the old Dave Clark Five song that Jett was going to put on her new album. Joan was keeping occupied with a Richard Pryor video, but now she was getting hungry, and maybe a bit edgy from sitting around talking to a nosy interviewer all day. She had been telling him that ever since she started gaining popularity, it wasn't easy for her to go out without getting recognized. So maybe this would be a good time to test her popularity. "C'mon, let's go to that hero shop across the street and get a sandwich," she said.

Across the street things aren't going so good. Sure, the sandwich is OK, but the place is crowded with lunchtime patrons and no one's recognized Jett yet. Maybe a few people are wondering why this girl with the raven-black hair and metal jewelry is eating with a tape recorder shoved in her face and a photographer shooting away madly. But no one's saying anything.

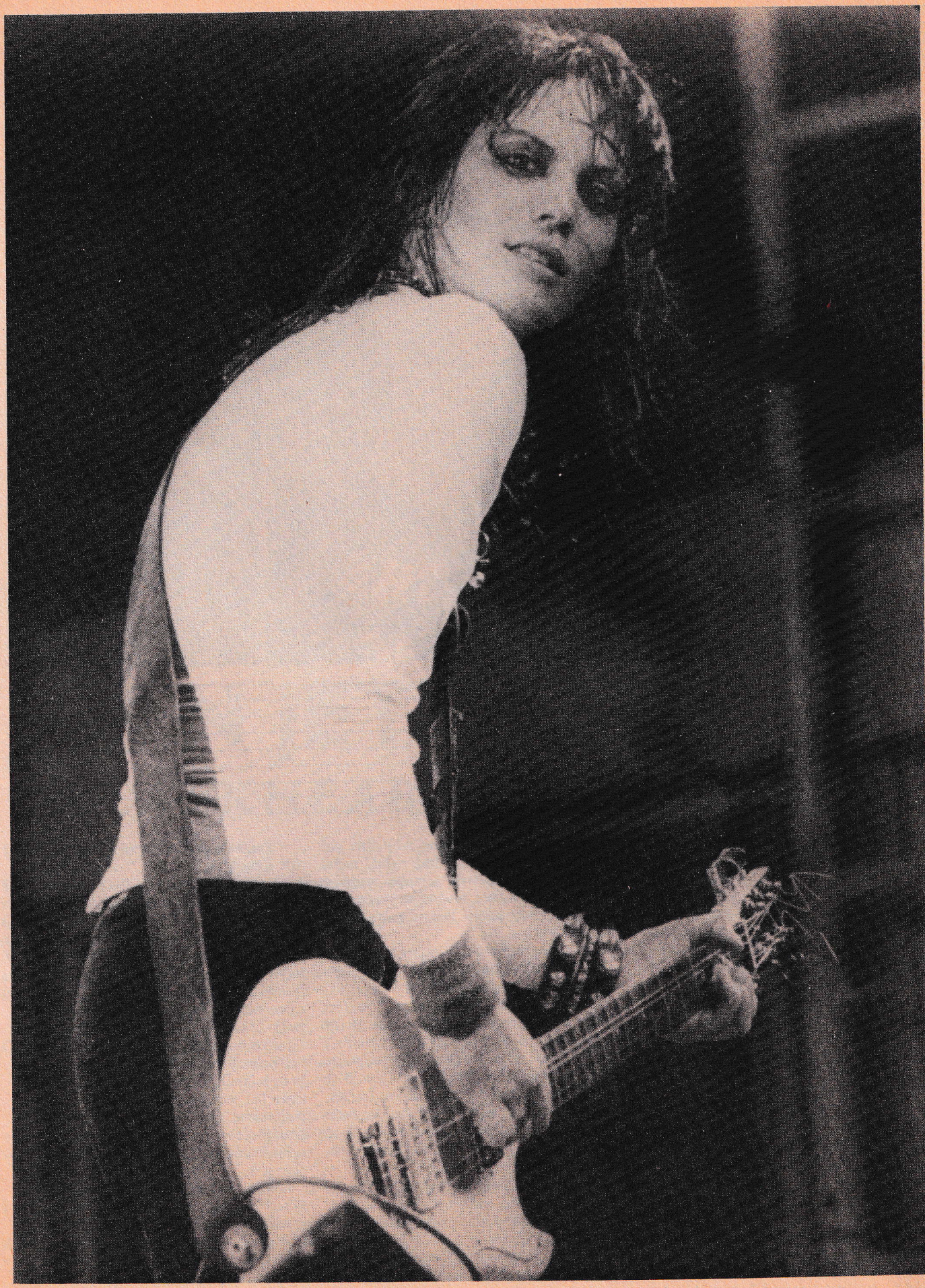
At the next table, a quartet of blue-collar workers couldn't seem to care less that the most popular rock and roller living on Long Island is sitting five feet away. The group of teenage girls at the table next to their's probably wouldn't have cared even if they *did* recognize Jett—maybe Rick Springfield would've tickled their hearts, but not Joan. In fact, only the clerks behind the deli counter seemed curious about the commotion in their place of business. And then it happened, sort of.

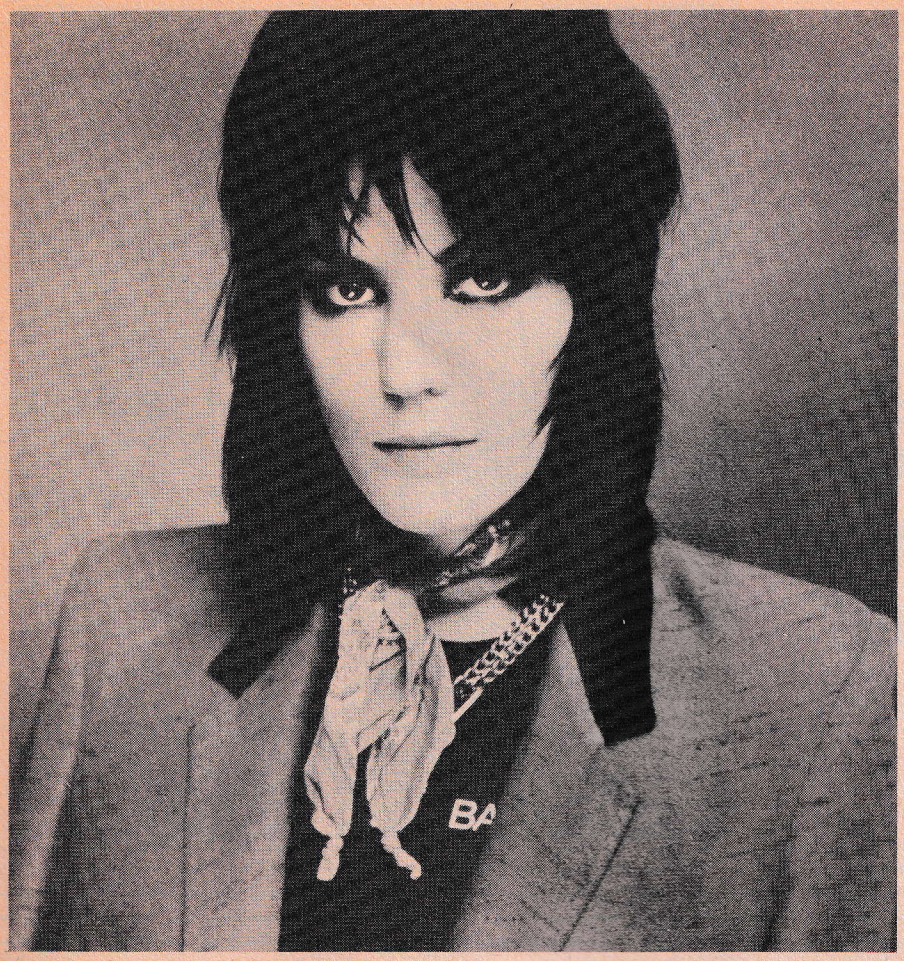
A man of about 60 motioned to the photographer to come over for a second. "Is that Joan Jett?" he asked. Good guess. "My daughter is a big fan of hers. She went all the way to Syracuse to see her perform." Jett was pleased. Lunch was on her, sort of.

"I just wanna pick up some sandwiches for Kenny and Ritchie," she said before we headed back to the studio. And why not? After all, it was their money.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., WINTER, 1982 "You remember those pictures you guys took of me on the beach last summer?" Yeah? "Well, ever since those came out in the local newspaper, there's been kids all over the beach trying to figure out which apartment is mine." Ah, the price of fame. Joan Jett might have been a familiar face last summer, but ever since her second album, *I Love Rock 'N' Roll* came out, she's been more like a household word. Jett is more than recognizable now on Long Island; she's a *bona fide* star.

Joan Jett can't lose and she knows it. When she says on her album cover that she loves rock and roll, she means it. She lives *and loves* rock and roll, always has. And the real thing, too, none of this filtered down, processed bullpucky. There may be a lot of women playing rock these





"To me, I've got no image."

days, but not many can say they've had it in their blood all their lives the way Jett can. Jett has an instinct for rock and roll—it's not something she sat down and decided to learn about one day—so it's only natural that she'd become a rock and roll star. And now that *I Love Rock 'N' Roll* is boosting the Jett name from cult hero (as opposed to roast beef hero) status to name-on-everyone's-lips status, there's no denying it: this is one Jett that's taking off fast.

Kenny Laguna, who not only produces Jett but manages her career (along with his wife Meryl), says that Jett is starting to reach a more mainstream audience with this new album. "At the very beginning we were getting punk rockers," he explained, "and now we've added to that some from the heavy metal crowd as well. Jett (that's what he calls her) appeals to the same kind of people who like the Stones: we get 30-year-old well-to-do women, a lot of young girls who look up to Joan, and of course, 16-24-year-old men, who are her biggest audience. But now it's spread to the pure rock and rollers, too. We still have the punks, but now we have everything from the metal kids to feminists, too."

Jett notices the range in her audience as well. "I think we have the best fans in the world, a total cross-section from extreme punk to total Grateful Dead fans. They're not violent but they get so excited they build themselves into a frenzy."

One wonders how much of her following sees Jett as a new sex symbol. If rock and roll ever needed a female sex symbol that didn't come off as all polish and prefabrication, it's now, but Jett doesn't see that as a major reason for her popularity. "To me, I've got no image," she stated. "I am what I am and I do what I do. Being that way gives the kids a chance to fantasize. If they want to think I'm one way they can, and if they want to think I'm another way they can."

In person, away from the rock and roll atmosphere and on her home turf, Jett did indeed come off as unpretentious and unaffected. Being with Jett is not like being with other rock singers who make sure you know they're the *star*. Jett doesn't try to be anything *but* what she is, another person in a crowd—she's just as much the rock fan as she is the rock performer. She makes people around her feel at ease.

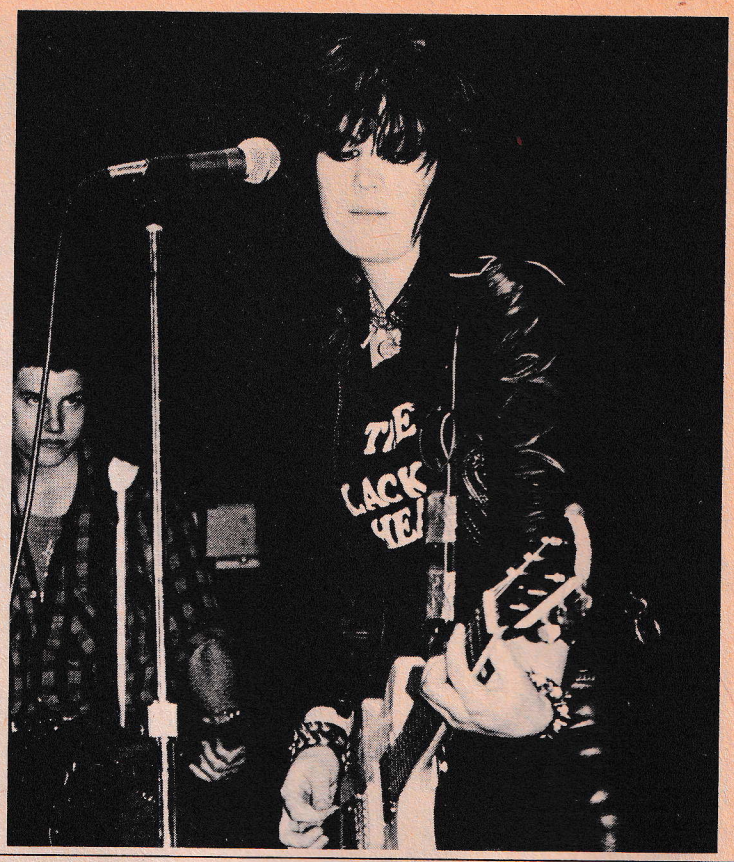
Laguna acknowledged, however, that "the sex thing is there, even though Joan has always downplayed it. I've seen women as well as men transfixed by her."

"When the audience sees me," admitted Jett, "they see a sweaty person on stage and it really turns them on. I put my all into every show."

Whatever the reasons, be it her give-it-all live show, the purity of her rock and roll on record, or the fact that she fills a void in music, Joan Jett has arrived. Her album was the third most requested album in the U.S. at the time of this interview, she'd been added to radio stations that wouldn't have touched her music a year ago, and the bad reputation that she named her first album after had begun turning into a positive one outside of the regions where she's always been popular up until now. But this is hardly an overnight success; she's worked hard for years, and 1981 was no exception, with live dates occupying no less than half of the days of the year. And considering that she's only 23 and has been playing rock and roll professionally since co-founding the Runaways (she was inspired to become a rock guitarist after seeing a Suzi Quatro concert) in Los Angeles in 1976.

With the Runaways, Jett helped not only to establish the notion of all-female bands, but the idea that women in rock and roll didn't have to be portrayed as

"Look at any normal American girl: She drinks and smokes and swears!"



sweet and innocent. The Runaways came off tough—sort of a female Ramones in an era when it was still quite daring to consider being something like that—and although the image helped to brand Jett with the bad reputation she sings about, she doesn't regret any of that.

"In America, it was always 'Oh, the Runaways; they smoke and drink and swear'," Jett recalled. "And I was the most outspoken one in the whole band! But it was the truth! Just take a look at any normal American girl: she drinks and smokes and swears! She thinks about sex. If you went into a female locker room—whether in junior high, high school or professional sports—and compared it to a male locker room, the female locker rooms are much dirtier. I just don't think the public was ready for that."

The Runaways became phenomenally popular in Europe and Japan (where they recorded a live album) but never really caught on in the States. Perhaps the fact that they came from L.A. (where Jett lived during her adolescence) and were nurtured under the tutelage of known rock svengali Kim Fowley did them in. But even today, Runaways fans hang on to Jett. "They may not have had a million fans," said Laguna, "but wherever Joan plays now, we get calls from hundreds of miles away from Runaways fans who want to come to the gigs. The fans she has from then are still hard core."

Jett accepts that perhaps the Runaways had to be guinea pigs so that rock and roll could open up for more women rockers, but that's all in the past now anyway. After the group broke up Jett said she was scared for awhile, not knowing what to do next. But she decided to go to England, and there she began her solo career. She met up with former Sex Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook, whose band she had admired, and laid down a few tracks in the studio. When she returned to the U.S., she went back to L.A. and produced the one and only Lp by the Germs, whose lead singer Darby Crash committed suicide shortly thereafter. She finished work on a film loosely based on the Runaways called *We're All Crazee Now* and then promptly caught pneumonia, which kept her in the hospital for six weeks. Upon her release, she went back to England, and recorded her first album, using various musicians and the Cordell/Laguna production team. (Both producers had been heavily involved with production since the '60s, working with acts like Tommy James and the Shondells and producing various bubble gum records.)

By that time, Jett had developed a working relationship with Laguna that both savored, and when it was time for a change, Jett took up Laguna's offer to move in with him and his wife and daughter in their Long Island apartment. There'd be more work around there, he said, and she'd have the advantage of being within proximity of both a beach and New York City.

But there was still one problem: Jett couldn't find a record company in the U.S. to release her album, although it was selling well as an import. Finally, Boardwalk Records took it on, renamed it *Bad Reputation* after the smoker title cut, and began watching the Lp collect sales figures beyond anyone's expectations. A year after its release, it was still selling well. "The record that refuses to die," Laguna called it.

In addition to the Jett/Laguna/Cordell original tunes on the record, a handful of covers helped the record along: '60s hits like Sam The Sham's "Wooly Bully," Lesley Gore's pre-feminist anthem "You Don't Own Me," and the Isley Brothers' classic raver "Shout"; and a pair from Gary Glitter, one of Jett's first rock and roll idols (along with others from the glitter era). The record had a certain quality about it that caught on—a captivating mixture of raunch and R&R soul—and there was no denying that Joan Jett had it in her to become something big.

Certainly her attitude, fueled by Laguna's impeccable taste for vintage rock and roll and her own experiences, was in the right place. "I've got it in me and it'll never leave," Jett said about her gut feeling for real rock and roll. "It's just something you have inside of you."

"People pick on Joan," added Laguna, "and say she sings flat and stuff like that. But where would the Stones be today without flat singing? Where would Dylan or the early Beatles be, for that matter? If

"My favorite thing is to be up on stage, singing with all I've got."

the Stones were just starting out today, they couldn't even get a contract based on today's standards."

But they did get one once, when *their* music was considered raunchy and more than the public could handle, and they seemed to do all right. Laguna and Jett feel they could have the same kind of long run as the Stones or Bruce Springsteen, as long as the music stays pure. And Jett assures that she has no intention of changing that aspect of her music: "You can do everything sane," she said, "or you can do it with feeling and whatever comes out comes out. That's the way I do it."

There's no denying the existence of that gut feeling on Jett's latest album, *I Love Rock 'N' Roll*. It shows an advancement over the first album, but not at the expense of the street level feel for true rock and roll. Jett feels that one major reason is that this record was made with her band, the Blackhearts, with whom she has been gigging for some time. "This album definitely has more of a band sound to it," Jett said. "On the first album the only people who were constant were Kenny, me and Ritchie. I think this new album is still pretty much the same style but maybe the songs tend to be more rock and rolly."

For the new album, Jett recruited a new Blackheart, guitarist Ricky Byrd, to join her, bassist Gary Ryan and drummer Lee Crystal. Again, Jett performed a few Laguna-chosen covers, including the DC5 hit "Bits And Pieces," and R&B obscurity by the Halos called "Nag," the Christmas standard "Little Drummer Boy" (done quasi-heavy metal style, but soon to be replaced by a Jett original on future pressings of the Lp) and the title track, which Jett heard in England by a group called the Arrows in 1976. "Crimson And Clover," the old Tommy James pseudo-psychedelic hit, was chosen by Jett herself —simply because she liked the tune— although Laguna was involved with the original in the '60s.

As for her originals, most of them, explained Jett, deal with relationships, but not necessarily her own. She said she can see enough by watching the relationships of others to be able to make a statement on them, but personally she doesn't have time to get involved. "I've got my career to think about," she said. "Relationships and love will come in time and I'm not worried about it. I've had them earlier when I was with the Runaways, but this way I can observe them and write about them without having to go through that pain and b.s. myself."

Even though (and because) she spends half the year on the road, Jett doesn't have time to get involved with anyone. She writes songs on the road only after she's settled into a tour for a few weeks, and otherwise spends the time not actually spent traveling by going shopping and checking out the towns she plays in. A lot of time is just spent taking care of herself. "You have to get serious about your career," she informed, "and not go drinking and partying. I just spent $50 on vitamins today. You just have to stay in your room, watch TV, and sleep."

Maybe it's not the most exciting-sounding life, as many people might think, but she doesn't mind. "I don't think most people realize how much work is involved," Jett said. "I didn't realize it when I was in the Runaways. You have to give up a lot of play time for work time. Once you reach your goals and you're successful you can do what you want. I'm sure Jagger can do what he wants."

Jett is prepared to reach her goal. And she plans on doing it with hard work. She's not particularly interested in video, and Laguna is adamant against it, saying video is "dangerous." Rock and roll, he believes, "survives on a street level. Video is just another way that the giant corporations control rock and roll." Video, he says, is "a way to get a band into 30 clubs" without the clubs having to actually book the bands. "New bands need places to play," he said, "and video is in the way of that. We're into playing all the small towns all over the country. Our record company thinks we're crazy."

Jett agrees with him, though. "I don't want to become a video band," she affirmed. "I want to keep making rock and roll records and keep going on the road. It's my favorite thing to do."

And will she still feel that way when she's 30? "I certainly hope so. I don't plan on dying, so I don't see what's gonna stop me." Rock on, Joan Jett!

Clockwise from left: Jonathan Cain, Ross Valory, Steve Smith, Neal Schon, and Steve Perry.

A CONVERSATION WITH NEAL SCHON

by Lorre Crimi Johnson

What's next for Journey?

In their most recent visit to Los Angeles, Journey met the press to discuss their stage show and detail their plans for the future. Most observers were quite impressed with the band's modular stage that had no visible amplifiers. Having the amplifiers set up underneath the stage gave the band higher visibility and let the members wander uninhibited. Russ Valory admitted, "It was hard for me at first to get used to it, therefore I put a speaker on stage." The rest of the band is very happy with the set up that took two years to completely develop.

Most of the last tour was video-taped including one particular performance in Houston that is scheduled for syndication by Mondo Video as soon as it is ready.

After taking a break from the road, the band has made plans to do a major tour of Europe, Scandinavia, and Japan before returning to the United States for the next time around the stages of our land. Journey has been laying low, both out of need to recover and so as not to jeopardize their superstar status with overexposure, and gave this one press conference as opposed to doing more in-depth personal interviews.

The band, their manager, and some unknown strait man. (This answer was hermetically sealed in a mayonaise jar.)

Neal Schon is one of rock's most aggressive guitarists, who in a relatively short and youthful career has played with two successful bands. In the early '70s, while still in his teens, Neal joined up with Santana. The association ended when leader Carlos Santana's spiritual direction interfered with the music.

Out of the remnants of Santana rose Journey, a band formed around the talents of Neal and Ross Valory, another Santana refugee. This new vehicle surpassed Santana in commercial scope and international appeal.

At a recent Journey soundcheck prior to their Forum appearance Neal displayed the proficiency and dedication that earned him the nickname, "The Bay Area's Eric Clapton." As the band ran through bits and pieces of their popular tunes and the technicians checked and double-checked the lights and sound, Neal entertained the press, which had gathered with aggressive determination.

As the soundcheck concluded, the press retreated, and one by one the band members left the stage until only one solitary figure remained. Dwarfed by the giant stage, Neal Schon stood alone, serenading the empty arena. The guitar he diligently picked was a new one he was testing for a Japanese company. I spoke with Neal after prying him away from the stage, but not from his guitar which he lovingly cradled and plucked as we spoke.

RECORD REVIEW: Does a new guitar inspire you?

Schon: Yeah, hopefully. When they stop inspiring me I throw them away and I go buy another one. I buy so many guitars just for that reason.

I've heard it said that before you can develop your own individual style of playing you start by emulating others. Who were some of the guitarists you emulated?

The people I used to emulate were Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck and Jimi Hendrix amongst some other blues players like B.B. King, Albert King and Mike Bloomfield. I listened to them all and instead of trying to play exactly like one of them I would learn so much of everyone's style, I'd take the time to learn it and then combine them all into one and people would go, "Whooa." They didn't even know that I was ripping, this was in the early Santana period. It's all emulated licks but in my own way. That turns out to be your style after awhile.

How old were you when you joined Santana?

I was 15 and a half, almost 16.

How did that come about?

I was out on the streets all the time playing when I was really young. I was in the city and I managed to make friends with a lot of club owners and I was sort of hustling myself 'cause I wanted to get something. I knew what I wanted to do when I was very young and I felt like I knew how to do it too. It was just being on the street, be there and play wherever you can play. There's usually someone around that will give you a shot at something. Or you're bound to run into somebody if you're really persistent about it and you're serious. You have to make connections, you have to talk to people. It's nice to have a manager that says, "Well, things aren't looking so good but don't worry about it. Things are happening." That's not what a manager's for. You've got to do that part first and then you need a manager to further your career.

It must take a special personality to go out and do that.

It does. I think they have to sense that you're sincere about it, that you really mean it and that you're not posing. We get accused of posing. They call us businessmen. They say we're educated businessmen playing rock and roll, so therefore we're posing. I mean, what am I supposed to do, not look after my money? If you make money you'd better look after it, otherwise half of what you're earning you're not paying attention to and I've done that once in my lifetime already.

It seems that if you have a successful business organization behind you you'd have freedom to concentrate on the music.

Exactly. Why not? If we want to take off for six months and think about an album and really put a lot of thought into it like the next one we can do it. We're going to spend a lot of time at home and put a lot of thought into the album. I'm not saying that we're going to over-rehearse, but everybody's got a lot of songs already, and if we want to take the time we don't have to worry about making money. We have to make a net of one hundred thousand dollars a month. We have a lot of people we support in our organization and it's a big nut to come up with every month so we're more or less surving. I don't think we're being greedy or stingy. I think I deserve every cent that I've earned because I work hard.

Do you find the San Francisco label attached to Journey a difficult stereotype to overcome?

Not at all. I think we're one of the most diversified bands that are out and I think that's one of the reasons why we're becoming more popular. More people are starting to open up and listen to us and hear about us and we're not just playing to 15 year olds, we're not just playing to 20 year olds, we're not just playing to 35 year olds, we're not just playing to 60 year olds, we're playing to everybody. You wouldn't believe the older people that really like this band that have never listened to it and maybe some people would think that's lame, that it's not hip, but music is music and it makes people feel good and that's why I like to play it.

Do you think the ballads have something to do with your broadening appeal?

Yeah. I don't mind playing them either. I enjoy playing both. I like to rock hard myself. I just did a solo album with Jan Hammer and it's obviously more hard rock than Journey. It's more like heavy metal fusion. But I really enjoy what I do with Journey. It makes me enjoy what I did with Jan that much more.

Journey built up a reputation as a touring band. Was it a difficult road to travel?

The heavy touring that we did was our only means of making money in the old days because we were making it by selling records—dying, I mean starving. We had to take out loans. It took us until *Infinity*, the first album that went platinum. It took us all the money that we made on *Infinity* to get out of debt so we could start to make income, but it's all worked out.

How can you tour when the albums aren't selling? How did the audience get to know about you?

We had a reputation as being a really good live band just from playing. They'd rather come see us live than buy the record. We were just that kind of band in those days. They wanted to see us jam. It's such a difference when you're playing jam music as opposed to song-oriented music. It's so different for people to sit down and listen to a jam on record when you can't see it visually. It's hard to make someone sit down and listen to 15 minutes of guitar, where they wouldn't mind doing it coming to see us live.

"I think we'll be setting trends in the 'Nineties."

Do you think the audience limits you when performing?

The expect you to play what they bought on record. I think we do a little bit of both; there's a happy medium. We play some of the songs exactly like the record and then some of the songs we'll improvise on. It's a wierd thing about improvising, some nights you're really on and things just come out of you really naturally and other nights you have to really try to make it happen where it doesn't happen. Maybe not everybody in the audience knows that. But certainly musicians and people that listen to a lot of performers have their ears tuned into music more than someone else that just listens to it when they're driving in their car. They would know.

Do you think the audience really picks up what you're doing on the guitar?

I don't think the mass majority do. Some people maybe like to hear guitar so they are tuned into the guitar, some people like drummers so they listen to drums and a lot of people like singers so they listen to Steven. I think they view us just as a whole more than anything. I would have to say that Steven is the front man and they view the rest of the band as a whole. It's sort of like what you've got with the Stones and Mick Jagger. They always separate Mick Jagger from the Rolling Stones because he's the lead man, the lead vocalist. He talks to the people. Nobody else is walking up to the mike all night long and saying, "Hi, how the hell are you?"

Has the novelty of touring worn off?

It's wierd. When you're in the studio you can't wait to go play 'cause you're so sick of being inside the studio and you never see the daylight but now that we're out here playing, I can't wait to get back into the studio because we've been on tour for three or four months and we've been playing the same songs every night. It's difficult to keep the initial feeling you had in the song, after you've played it for four or five years, every night. But I think we're managing to do that. That's an art in itself.

What do you do to get away from it all?

I play baseball, softball, water ski, ride a bicycle, swim, anything that doesn't have anything to do with music. When I'm home I barely ever listen to the radio or rock and roll. I listen to Bach, Julian Bream, and it rubs off on me in the rock and roll that I play, but it doesn't sound like them. I guess it's some new direction I'm going in. It's totally melodic.

Classical music seems to be an influence on a lot of rock musicians.

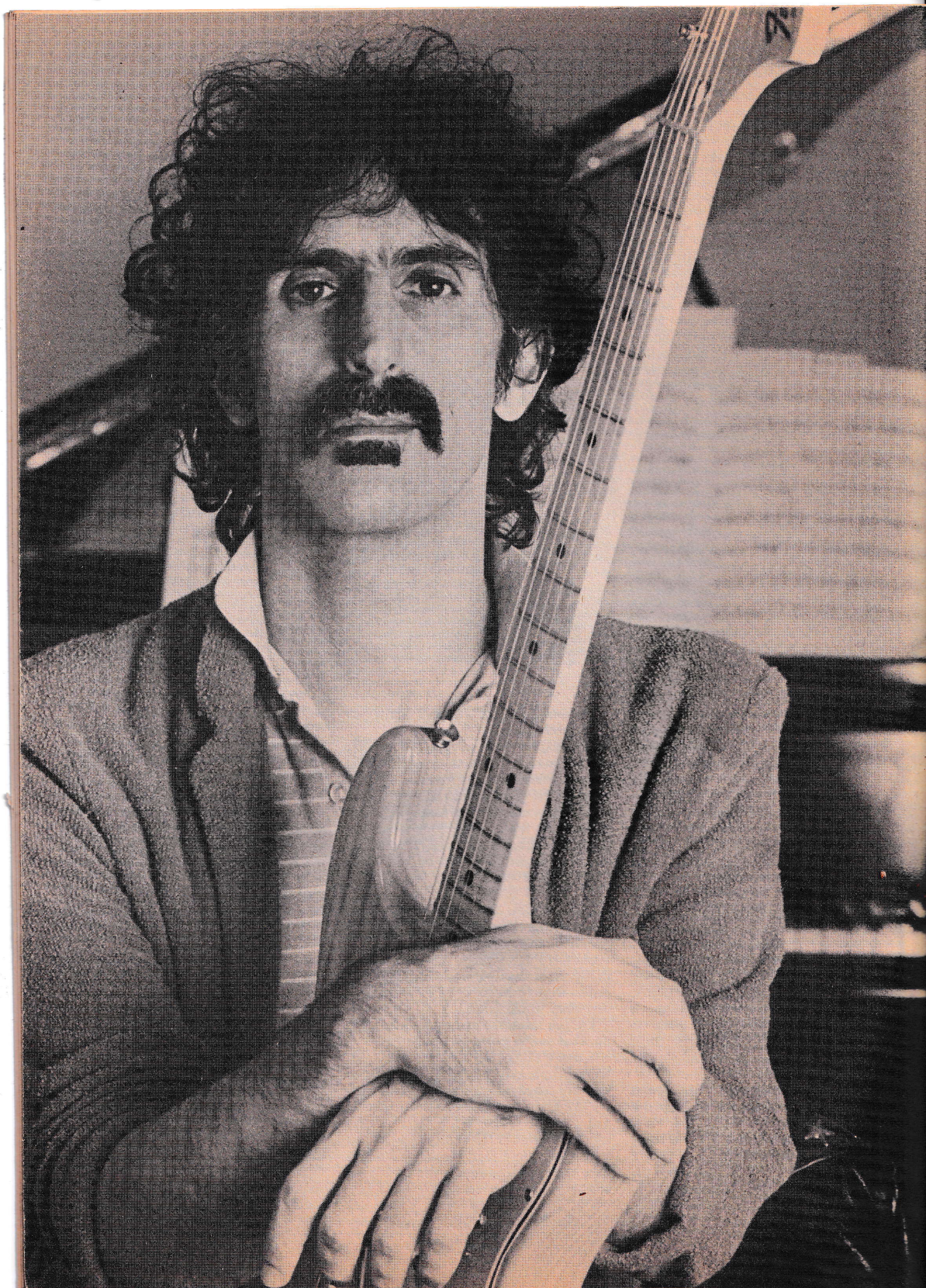
You know why? It's soothing to the nerves. I come out of rehearsal after I've beaten my guitar's guts out and turned my amps all the way up and I get in my car and I listen to classical stations and I go, "Oh, that sounds good. I'm tired of that loud guitar."

What's the next Journey album going to be like?

It's gonna be a whole lot different than *Escape* but I know it's gonna be just as good, probably better. With Jonathan we feel like doors are opening. A new person in a band can change the whole chemistry of the band and make it go from black to white. It's that simple. I'm not saying that Greg was not that person. He was happening in his own right. But what we have with Jonathan now, with all the other members, there's a lot of magic happening; we feel reborn. Plus he plays guitar and that opens up a lot of new doors for me.

Each decade has a band or artist that represents the overall sound. The 'Fifties had Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley, the 'Sixties the Beatles and the Stones, the 'Seventies, Led Zeppelin. Is Journey the band of the 'Eighties?

The 'Nineties. We've never gotten into trends. Now that we've had a hit with "Who's Crying Now?" they're saying, "Are you doing that because REO had ballads?" We've been playing ballads; it's been our forte since the word go. If anything, I think they've looked on our side a little, and got lucky too. I think we'll be setting trends in the 'Nineties. I think that the life span of the band is going to be that long.



INTERVIEW

FRANK ZAPPA

By Steven Rosen
photos by John Livzey

He has released dozens of albums in the U.S. and yet Frank Zappa claims to be an "unknown band" here. He is probably correct. His music has never been mainstream, borrowing as it does from the classics, jazz, and rock and roll. He is as honest in his speaking as he is with his music and in a recent talk at his home he made known his feelings about the current situation in the music industry as well as touching on highlights of a long and changing career.

RECORD REVIEW: How long have you had a studio at your house?

Frank Zappa: About a year-and-a-half. I'd rather not talk about what I have here but in general I have a studio at my house, it's a private studio, it's not for rent to anyone else, it has a lot of top secret equipment in it, and that's that. I do all my recording here including mixing and I also have a remote 24-track truck and that stuff is processed here. I only got this a year-and-a-half ago because I had to save my money; I had to save my money just to get a facility where I could work.

Before when I came off the road and I would need to make an album and all the famous groups would have all the time booked at all the good studios in town. Fleetwood Mac would be at a place for eleven months and you couldn't get in there and somebody else would be at the Record Plant and you couldn't get time at a first class studio unless you wanted to wait around. So I said, 'I'll build my own.'

Are you interested in any outside productions?

No, nor do I wish to be. I had it, all done.

Could you talk briefly about your production of the GTO's album?

I'll tell you what, why don't we save that aspect of it 'til later because the first part of the lawsuit between Warner Brothers and Herb Cohen and myself has been settled and as part of that I'm going to be getting all those masters and I'm going to re-release the GTO's and Wild Man Fischer albums. And I'd rather talk about that when the albums come out. But I will mention that the GTO's album was pretty far ahead of its time in terms of what was going on in it and it has some interesting sidemen on it like Rod Stewart and Jeff Beck. I knew Jeff's work and he just happened to be in Los Angeles and that's when Rod Stewart was the lead singer of his band. And they came over to the house and I asked them if they'd do something on the GTO's record.

What prompted the guitar albums (*Shut Up 'N Play Your Guitar; Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar Some More; Return of the Son of Shut Up 'N Play Your Guitar*)?

There has been a demand for them for some time where people would say you don't play enough guitar, you don't play enough guitar in the show or on the albums so I figured to accomodate those people who didn't get enough I'd just put out a whole lot of guitar solos. And they sold real well. In fact they sold better than the last two commercial releases I had. I like it, I think it's great that people like that kind of music. I'm as happy playing instrumental music as I am doing the other things. I've been doing some work on some cuts which seem suitable for another package of that type.

These three albums aren't even chronological; they were sequenced so that there's enough variety on each side in terms of different styles, tempos, and key signatures, so that there was continuity per each 18 minute unit. There was quite a bit of stuff to choose from and I tried to pick the things I thought had the most interest and also the best recording quality.

There is mention of the guitars you used on the albums but which amplifiers were used?

Depending on the year it was either a Marshall or a Boogie. The only overt ef-

fects you can hear in there are on "Ship Ahoy" there's a voltage control filter and on "Pink Napkins" I'm using a Mutron bi-phase and a harmonizer. Some of the other tracks were processed through dyna-flangers.

Can you sense a maturity in your playing?

I doubt that but I was listening to some tapes from Helsinki in 1973 and 1974 and I was amazed at the types of things I was playing. It also seemed I was playing about twice as fast then as I am now. But I wasn't using as much feedback and stuff. I get to play whatever the band will let me play. If you have a rhythm section that will support you in doing certain types of things you can go in that direction but you can't force it. Different rhythm sections make me play differently. If you're playing with Vinnie Colaiuta (*Tinsel Town Rebellion*) there's no problem in playing the weirdest poly-rhythms that you want because he's not going to get lost. Whereas if you're playing with Chester Thompson you don't want to do that too much; not that Chester can't follow poly-rhythms but he doesn't have the same kind of radar that Vinnie does. And he gives you a different kind of support. And he makes you want to play a different way. And if you're playing within a rhythm section format you have to have some respect for the guys you're playing with. And work with them to make them sound good, too. It has to be a cooperative effort; you just don't want to play any old thing. Because then there's no groove to it.

What about playing with someone like Terry Bozzio (*Zoot Allures*)?

Bozzio is really a good drummer but the main problem I had playing with him was the amount of fills per cubic centimeter. You had to be constantly leaving spaces for him to do things that weren't necessarily germane to what you were doing. In the end I suppose it comes out all right because the kids would be very stimulated by massive tom toms and cymbals. It wasn't as easy for me to play with Terry as it was to play with Vinnie or Chester. Or Chad Wackerman who is the drummer in the band now.

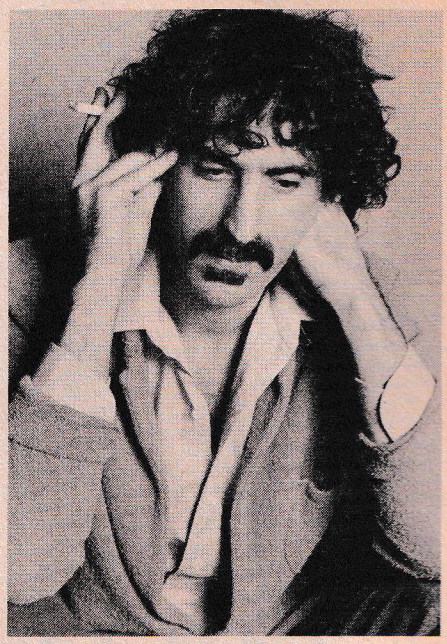
What do you think of Bozzio's new band, Missing Persons?

I like "Mental Hopskotch." And I like Dale's voice (female singer in band).

Right now there's ten sides of new material that hasn't been mixed yet and we've been overdubbing on. And I don't know what I'm going to do with it because there's so much stuff. There's vocal and instrumental stuff. I have everything from really complicated orchestral-type things to a monogloid rock and roll song called "No Not Now." It's Roy Estrada singing three-part falsetto harmony with himself. And all stops in-between.

The basic band which has played on all this material is Chad Wackerman on drums, Scott Thunes on bass, Tommy Mars on keyboards, Steve Vai on Stratocaster, Ray White on guitar and vocals, Bobby Martin on tenor sax, keyboards, and vocals, and Ed Mann on percussion.

"I'm selling 10 to 20 times more in Europe than I am here."



I think eight pieces is about the max that I can afford to work with. That's already pretty big. When you start carrying eight people around on the road generally it costs as much if not more for their transportation, hotels, and food as for their salaries. It's very expensive. And the kind of record sales we have and the kind of concert attendance we have doesn't necessarily warrant immense expenditures.

Can you say when an album might arise from this material?

We're beginning to mix and there will be something by mid-May. We're doing overdubs now and we have to start rehearsing for a world tour. Minus the United States.

Do you listen at all to the music around you?

No, because I normally wake up around three o'clock in the afternoon and go to bed at six o'clock in the morning and I wake up at three o'clock in the afternoon and do it over again. And literally all I do is go in the bedroom and sleep and go in the studio and work. I can smell the flowers when I open the door and say good night to the guys at six o'clock in the morning and that's about it. I love it but I don't feel there's some big void in my life because I don't listen to the radio.

Do you use anyone else in the studio as a sounding board for ideas?

I usually discuss if I'm going to do a special electronic effect with the engineers prior to executing it because what you do on the tape has some bearing of what you get on the disc. And certain things which sound fantastic on tape are lethal to put on a disc. There are phasing situations which occur and a lot of those things have to be scrutinized in advance before they're executed. There are some things which you just can't get on record because it makes the needle jump out of the groove. We cut it pretty close to the margin because I want to get as many interesting sounds as I can on the record. Some of them create mechanical problems so those are the kinds of discussions that I will have. But I'm totally the boss when it comes to what notes are going to be played. And how they're going to be phrased and all that stuff.

What if somebody says they have a better way?

I tell them to stop, shut up, and do it exactly the way I'm telling you. I've always done it that way but remember: I do it in a nice and friendly way. There's only one guy in the band who would offer ideas and sometimes he comes up with great ideas and that's Tommy Mars but usually it's just a waste of time because I already know exactly what I want and if they'll just do it this way we can move on. It's a slow process, overdubbing stuff, and if you stop and consider a hundred different options every time you're pushing a button, you'll be in the studio until you have a long, white beard. There's no other way to do it.

You write out all the parts for the instruments?

Some things have to be written out because they're so complicated. And some things I just say goes like this and hum them a note or notes and they figure it out and then we play it. So it's a great help if you can read if you're going to be in my band. But also it's important to have a good ear for the simple-minded stuff so I don't have to go through the process of writing it down on a piece of paper. It just slows things down. The only reason I use written music is because the part is so complicated I couldn't hum it to you. I much prefer to give someone the written part and work with him and it's done. Written music doesn't necessarily guarantee the quality of the music is spectacular. There's a lot of stuff written on paper which is dog ----.

When you record do you try and get as many guys playing at once as possible or...?

As few. Because when you cut with as few guys as possible you can pay attention to the sound of every individual instrument, you can optimize the phrasing of each part, and you can make the guy sound as good as he can sound at that particular time. If you're recording an entire

rhythm section you have a bunch of guys on the clock and it's a party time atmosphere. It's very difficult to optimize the individual sounds so it's *the* guitar sound or *the* bass sound that you always wanted. You don't get that with a bunch of guys sitting in there. In fact, one of the things we did recently was to overdub a set of drums on some tapes which were originally done with the Linn rhythm box. Most people don't like to overdub drums because they think it won't sound good, but, let me tell you, they are wrong! We got a tom tom sound which is God. It took a lot of science and a lot of knick knacks but we got a tom tom sound which is surrealistically large. It just takes your breath away.

It's hard to say if this particular track will be on the next album because all the stuff is in different styles. I haven't decided what stuff will be on the next disc which will only be a single record. I know that one side of it is going to contain a song called "Drowning Witch," "Envelopes" and "Teenage Prostitute" but what the other side is going to be I haven't figured out yet. And the title of the album is going to be *Drowning Witch*. A long time ago there was this guy called Roger Price who did this cartoon called "Droodles" and one of the pictures in the book was called "Drowning Witch." Right now we're in the process of trying to locate this guy to get permission to use the picture because this book came out in the '50s. I want to use the original picture.

So you would go in with a drummer and bassist and lay down the tracks?

It would be more minimalist than that. I would program the drum box and I've got at least twenty hours of very complicated drum tracks on reels of tape. So I would make up the drum parts and bring in a bass player and have him play on top of that and add some chord changes to it, write a melody to that, write some words to that, and add the drums last. And then maybe redo the bass and we have a synthesizer which can take care of all keyboard and horn parts.

How do you feel about *Tinsel Town Rebellion*?

I like the album but I wasn't happy with the amount of units it sold. Nor was I happy with the amount of units *You Are What You Is* sold. I think radio has a lot to do with it now that radio is back where it was twenty years ago in terms of a strict playlist and real conservative taste. But it's probably just a fact of business life right now that what I have to offer will not get out to the widest spectrum of the American public because of what they are allowed to hear on the radio. But that doesn't necessarily mean what I'm doing is not relevant or good; it just means the five guys who program all the radio stations in the U.S. aren't gonna let you hear it, that's all.

That's not a new situation for you.

It's worse today than it's ever been before.

The title track of *Tinsel Town Rebellion* was a bit cynical.

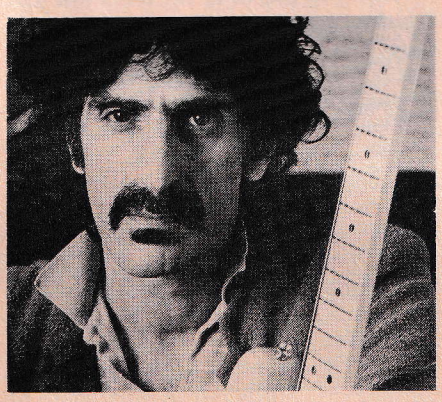
There's nothing wrong with being cynical. I think that's the best way that you can be. If you're not cynical, what are you? You're bent over. Nobody in his right mind should be expected to accept the 20th Century as a whole without asking a few questions. And I think the more questions you ask the more you have to laugh about what the answers are. And the song "Tinsel Town Rebellion" is probably one of the more accurate descriptions of what goes in in L.A. or Southern California punk merchandising. That's what it's all about.

Did you go through that when you first started?

No, because business wasn't like that. It wasn't saturated, there was still room to breathe and still room for experimentation. And you could step out in your own direction and take chances but today nobody really steps out. They pretend to step out but they step only in the footsteps of the guy right in front of them. 'Ooh, he got away with something that was this weird, if I do it just like this but put a phaser on it then I'll be commercial.' That's all it is, copy-cat music over and over again.

Nobody is doing anything that excites you?

Not that I've heard; there may be somebody out there but I haven't heard him.



"The five guys who program all the radio stations in the U.S. aren't gonna let you hear it."

From time to time I might hear one good song but the general run-of-the-mill of what gets signed and what gets released and what gets promoted is the most tepid, puny, useless stuff. Today it's all remakes of songs from the '60s; it's real cowardice music. I think that cowardly approach which is exemplified by the actions of the record industry guys who sign these groups and insist they record those types of songs, is a great barometer of the times. This is the music of chicken---- America, the America that is worried only about its bottom line. It's the music of an America which really doesn't believe it has anything to offer. It just wants to stand still; it wants the rest of the world to go away and stop bothering it. In that respect the whole situation on American radio is a pretty true psychological profile of ourselves at this point in history. If you look at it in that perspective; it's all second rate, too. If you came from outer space and listened to American radio and watched what was going on in American music, you could only come to the assumption that these people are scared. What are they afraid of? They're afraid of the Moral Majority, they're afraid of losing money, they're afraid of getting blown up, they're afraid of standing up for anything they believe in, and on top of that they don't believe in nothin' to begin with. We're in bad, bad shape. And I think radio tells us this. And so do consumer sales patterns.

Do you think radio will get worse?

Yeah. It's the same way the economy will get worse. I mean an accident could happen and everything could turn out all right, but I don't see it. Because people who are that afraid and refuse to take responsibility for their actions and refuse to look the future square in the face and say 'OK, let's get on with it and straighten things out,' unless you have that kind of courage you deserve to be a mediocrity, you deserve to be a second rate, no content, totally intimidated chickenshit kind of country. You want to have the bold pioneering spirit that you used to read about in the books? Well, it's got to come from inside of your guts; nobody inflicts it on you by saying a few nice words on television with a flag in the background. That's all bull.

You didn't vote for Reagan?

No, I didn't (laughs). Nor would I have voted for Carter. It's the choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Ronald Reagan is the perfect president for this day and age because he's a non-content president; he's got no substance.

You're a *Saturday Night Live* fan?

Yeah, up to a point. Up to the point where they stopped doing funny stuff. The last time I did their show, the only thing they cared about was the ratings and not offending people. I actually sat there and heard a conversation in one of the planning rooms where they said 'We can't put this skit on because it's going to

offend women's groups.' I mean if you have to worry about who you're going to offend when you're doing something funny, then...see what I mean? It's that same America.

Did you know John Belushi well?

No, I didn't know him very well, but I am sad that he's gone because the guy was a comedy genius. He was great, he had it, he was a funny guy. They don't build them like that too often. Style-wise there was a big difference between Ackroyd and Belushi; I would rate them as equals. Ackroyd was more intelligent and Belushi was more fall-down-and-hurt-yourself.

Did you like the Blues Brothers?

I didn't care for them as a musical act but I did admire the fact that they recorded "Rubber Biscuit." Any person who records "Rubber Biscuit" can't be all bad.

How is the underpants quilt coming (during Zappa's last tour he collected female undergarments from the cities on the tour and is in the process of sewing them together to make a blanket)?

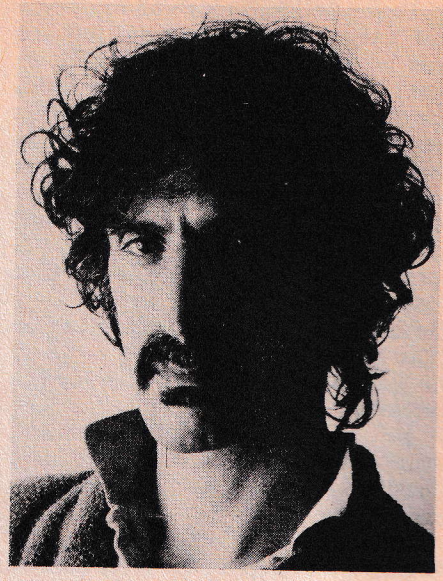
The last time I saw it it was three-fourths done. The girl who volunteered to make it when she first started looked like a girl who lived in Boulder, Colorado, one of those types of girls (conservative). The last time I saw her she had blue streaks in her hair and was wearing punk clothes. She was at the concert and the quilt had not only underclothes but dildos and things sewn to it.

Now for some trivia: the Mothers of Invention was originally called The Muthers?

Yeah, at one time it was with *u*. That was when we were working at The Trip (long defunct club on the Sunset Strip).

Were those days amazing?

All days are amazing. These days are amazing. By contrast to what was going on around town back then it was interesting but you have to remember the collective musical expertise of that (first) band was nowhere near what the contemporary musician is capable of doing. Those weren't skilled guys. We were doing things apart from the rest of what was going on. But L.A. was a real sick place then. The only thing that was going on in L.A. at that time...you didn't exist unless you played folk-rock. That was it. Period! If you didn't look or act like the Byrds, then, good luck. Things were so weird that Paul Butterfield Blues Band came to town which was a good band, they could really stomp, and they couldn't draw flies, people hated them. They wanted them to play 'turn, turn' stuff. People are so one-dimensional here. And Donovan was big, real big. The (Buffalo) Springfield did okay but the two most successful and popular groups then were the Byrds and Love. You had to be nice folk-rock, 12-string guitar. The Doors were somewhat later than the Byrds. When they first came on the scene, they weren't too hot either, they were too abstract for



the locals. They gradually gained popularity here but I don't think they really hit until they started going out on the road and playing in other parts of the country. Canned Heat was also much later.

Did you ever play with the Byrds?

No, but we played with Love. They opened for us in some other cities but not in L.A. It wasn't the original group then, it was probably the third or fourth generation.

When you played at the clubs like The Whisky, would there be a lot of people there?

If you played The Whisky there would be people there no matter what. We got into the Whisky A Go Go only because Johnny Rivers wanted to take a vacation and go on a tour. He had been working there for over a year. And they left his sign outside. We worked there for five weeks and they didn't have our name on the front of the building until maybe the last couple of days. And people kept coming in, and that's how it happened. We were doing material from the *Freak Out!* album, which was the first concept album.

What was it like playing with John Lennon and Yoko Ono on their album?

That's not the way it happened. What happened was: we were working at the Fillmore East and they came in and sat in with us and it just happened to be the same night we recorded the *Live at the Fillmore* alubm. So the whole event got on tape. And a deal was made in the dressing room afterwards where they said they wanted to be able to release the tapes and I said I wanted to be able to release the tapes and we mutually released each other. In other words I'll give you a copy of the tapes and you can do what you want with them and I'll do what I want with them. I've never released it but what they did with it was really the pits. They turned off some of the words that Howard (Kaylan) and Mark (Volman) were singing in a song called "Scumbag" and they left some of the best stuff out of it. And what they did was they took a song called "King Kong" that we were playing and retitled it "Jam Rag" and claimed the publishing on it. So I'm not too thrilled about the results of that particular collaboration and one of these days I'm going to mix the stuff from that particular performance so you can hear everything that went on. Because Mark and Howard were talking about "sticking Yoko in a scumbag." I never had any further conversation with them because at that point it was one of those things where you'd have to go to a lawyer. I think there were some questions asked by Capitol Records as to why that had been done but in order to straighten it out, you'd have to go in with an accountant and see the sales of that particular album and start a lawsuit over the fact that they took the publishing and this and that. I just thought it was a real cheap shot thing to do.

Any feelings about Lennon's death?

I think it's absurd that anybody can walk up to somebody and shoot him like that and get such a menial sentence. That's obvious murder. It's sickening. It shouldn't happen to anybody; it shouldn't happen to John Lennon or anybody.

Did you talk to any of the Beatles about using the Sgt. Pepper's cover as a take-off for *We're Only In It For The Money*?

I talked to Paul McCartney on the phone and his response was "What? You talk business? Talk to my lawyers." So I had my lawyer talk to his lawyer and as a result the cover was held up for thirteen months. Nice people, these Beatles.

What about *Hot Rats*?

It's a nice little album but I don't think it's my best album. The thing that sets it apart is when it was first released in the U.S. it went to number 90 on the charts for one week and then disappeared. Everyone hated it, they said you can't put out an instrumental album because they won't have anything to play on the radio. All the reviews in the paper were totally negative. The only place where it was accepted well was England where it became a Top 10 album and Holland where it did real well. Strangely enough it continued to sell about 1,500 units a month for all those years after that. It just continued to sell as a catalog item. But when it came out nobody liked it. They thought it was a waste of time.

What is your best selling record?

The best selling record is *Sheik Yerbouti*. It doesn't surprise me, because it was all through CBS' promotion. It was released through Phonogram in the U.S. and it was released by CBS outside of the U.S. and the bulk of the sales was outside of the U.S. Generally speaking we sell more records outside the U.S. We're

pretty much an unknown group in the U.S. but in Europe it's a different story. I think the discrepancy is even more distressing if you look at the population of the U.S. versus the population of Europe. If I sell more records in Europe than I do in the U.S., if you average it out it means I'm selling 10 to 20 times more in Europe than I am here. And I don't see how that's possible because most of the places where it's selling they don't even speak English. We don't do very well in Japan. We've been there once. In Australia we had gold albums with *Live at the Fillmore* and *Just Another Band From L.A. Overnight Sensation, Aprostrophe (')*, and *Joe's Garage* were all gold in the U.S. We have two or three from Canada and a few from other countries.

Moving to your guitar, because you play so much on stage does it tend to go out of tune?

What I've started doing on recent tours is as soon as I'm done I take it off and give it to the guitar roadie who sits over at the side and strobes it and I walk around with a hand held microphone until it's time for me to play again and when I get it back it better be in tune and I play. For the first ten years or so on the road, I didn't even have a strobe tuner; they were very rare items. And as soon as strobe tuners came out everything was a little bit easier to deal with. Now I think I've got the best system where I don't have to stop and tune myself on stage; I can hand it to somebody else who can do it and the show can keep going on.

Was there a particular guitar you used for the first years of the Mothers?

Yeah, it was an ES-5 Switchmaster. I used that on the *Freak Out!* album, *Absolutely Free, We're Only In It For The Money*, and up through *Reuben & The Jets*. I liked it. I had a gold-top Les Paul but my first guitar was a Telecaster and then I switched to a Jazzmaster and after the jazzmaster got repossessed I bought this hollow body (ES-5). I got the Les Paul because the hollow body was feeding back too much—we started working bigger and bigger places. The more the volume goes up the more feedback you get and I didn't want to stuff it full of styrofoam in order to keep it from feeding back and so I switched to a Les Paul and somebody stole that. Then I got a real nice second-hand SG and played that from *Apostrophe (')* through *Bongo Fury*. About the time of *Bongo Fury* I switched over to an SG that this guy in Phoenix made. It was an SG copy and it had an extra fret on it and it went up to an E-flat. I started playing that for a few years and then I got another Les Paul and I've played Stratocasters on and off. Over the years I've switched between a Strat and those other instruments. On this last tour I started playing the Strat and ended up playing the Les Paul.

Do you find one guitar harder to play than the other?

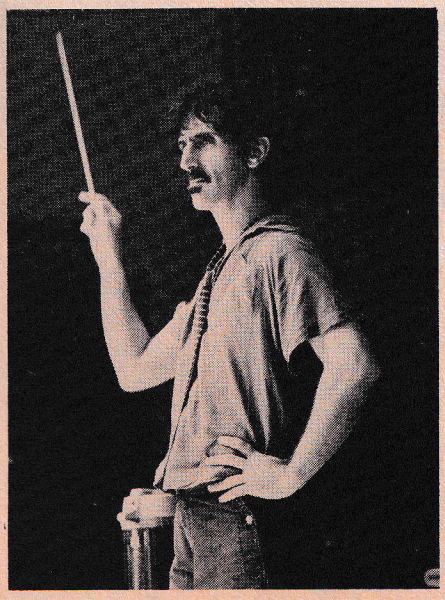
They require totally different playing techniques. Not only the way the fingerboard is but the way the body of the guitar sits. In other words, when you hang a Strat around your neck, the 12th fret will hit your body at a certain point, but if you put the Les Paul on it will be in a different position. Any time you have to move any part of your body a few inches it changes the whole balance of what you play and it affects the speed and accuracy of what you can do. But then there are sounds which come out of my Stratocaster which don't come out of anything else on the face of the earth.

Do you use the vibrato arm on the Strat?

Yeah. It stays in tune to a degree and what you have to do if it doesn't come back right and usually it comes back sharp is to give it another yank and let it settle and if it comes back flat you have to press harder and intonate with your (left) hand. What you do is you don't start your solo off with a big wham. That would be dumb. Steve Vai, the other guitar player in the band, is a total whiz on the Strat and plays all those harmonic noises and some of them are just never in tune. I mean he tries and tries. The other day he came in to do some overdubs and he had clamps on and that's great but if you ever go out of tune in the middle of your solo you can't reach over and tweak it.

Did you ever do any shows with Hendrix?

Yeah, he sat in with us at the Garrick Theater. In fact, he played my hollowbody through a Fender Twin and got feedback out of that. All I know is he was working downstairs at this place, The Cafe Au Go Go, and we invited him to sit in and he came upstairs and I let him use my guitar and he got feedback and went ape. I saw him at the Cafe Au Go Go when he played with us and at a pop festival in Miami where we worked with him. That's when he burned his guitar and I got it about a year-and-a-half later from the guy who used to be one of his roadies, a guy called Howard Parker. We also jammed with him at this little club called The Castaways or something like that in Miami because all the groups who were playing at the festival were staying at this same hotel. And there was a bar and we had a jam session there. Yeah, I think he was good. I enjoyed playing with him. He also came over to the house one time with Buddy Miles and he said, "Hi, this is my friend Buddy" and I said "Great, pleased to meet you Buddy" and Buddy says "Hi, Frank" and sits down on the sofa and nods out. His head went back, his mouth fell open and he was snoring for two hours while I continued to talk with Jimi.



You don't play much acoustic guitar?

Seldom. I only practice on it. I mean, I like the way it sounds on record but I don't consider myself an acoustic player. I used it on *We're Only In It For the Money* and there's one cut called "Sleep Dirt" on *Studio Tan*. There's a solo on "Stinkfoot" where I use an acoustic guitar with a Barcus-Berry on it and that's going to one side and the electric output of the acoustic is going to a Mutron on the right side. A hybrid kind of thing.

You tend to use DiMarzio pickups on your guitars.

What you have to do is match resonances of the instrument to the type of pickup that's on there and it takes some experimenting around to get the sound you want to hear. For instance, on my Hendrix Strat I have a Dan Armstrong in the front position, I have a Seymour Duncan Strat pickup in the middle position, and a Carvin in the rear position. On another blond Strat there's an EMG, a Carvin, and a Dan Armstrong, and on my Les Paul I have a Carvin and a Dan Armstrong. And on my SG I have a DiMarzio and an EMG. The EMG is wired up in a way they were never intended to be used; normally they're a real clean, clear pickup but if you hook them up the wrong way...

Are you involved in any video projects?

I'm doing some stuff now that I can't talk about.

Do you talk to Beefheart anymore?

Not in about four years. He's got his own thing to do. *Trout Mask Replica* was a splendid album, there's nothing else like it.

What other projects are you into?

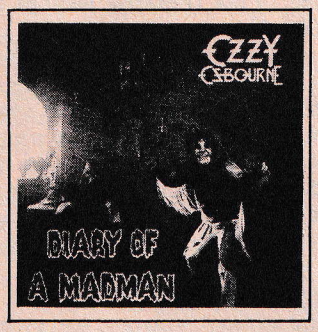
Finally this year I'm going to get some orchestra performances and it's going to be in Berlin. That will happen in July, and for two weeks after that we'll be recording in Czechoslovakia. I'm taking my recording truck over there to do it. This truck has 100 inputs. The concert will be *Golden Age* by Shostakovitch and three movements from *The Planets* and that will be the first half of the show and the second half will be my stuff plus my band.

1982 RECORD REVIE

ROCK

Best Albums
1. Black Sabbath,
The Mob Rules

2. Ozzy Osbourne,
Diary of A Madman



3. Foreigner, *Four*

4. Ozzy Osbourne,
Blizzard of Ozz

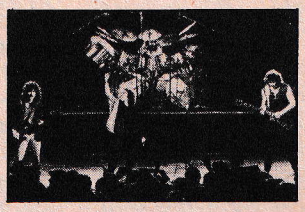
5. AC/DC,
For Those About to Rock

Best Singles
1. Rolling Stones,
Start Me Up
2. Foreigner, *Urgent*
3. GoGo's,
Our Lips are Sealed

Best Songwriters
1. Ronnie James Dio
2. Ozzy Osbourne
3. Bruce Springsteen

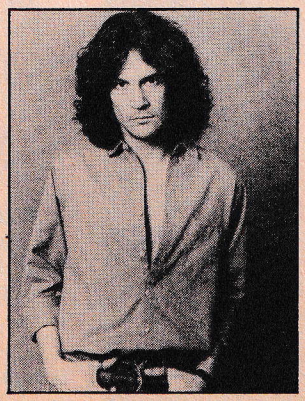
Artist of the Year
1. Ozzy Osbourne
2. Billy Squier
3. Bruce Springsteen

Best Groups
1. Black Sabbath



2. Blizzard of Ozz
3. Rush
4. AC/DC
5. Iron Maiden

Best New Artist
1. Billy Squier



2. Ozzy Osbourne
3. GoGo's

Best New Group
1. GoGo's

2. Iron Maiden
3. Ozzy Osbourne

Male Vocalist
1. Ronnie James Dio
2. Steve Perry
3. Ozzy Osbourne

Female Vocalist
1. Pat Benatar

2. Stevie Nicks
3. Rindy Ross

Guitarist
1. Tony Iommi
2. Randy Rhoads
3. Eddie Van Halen
4. Ritchie Blackmore
5. Michael Schenker

Keyboards
1. Geddy Lee
2. Don Airey
3. Billy Joel
4. Rick Wakeman
5. Steve Winwood

Bass Guitarist
1. Geezer Butler
2. Geddy Lee

3. John Entwistle

Drums
1. Neil Peart

2. Phil Collins
3. Bill Bruford

Misc. Instruments
1. Ian Anderson, flute
2. Clarence Clemmons, sax
3. Junior Walker, sax

Producer
1. Martin Birch
2. Mutt Lange
3. Ted Templeman

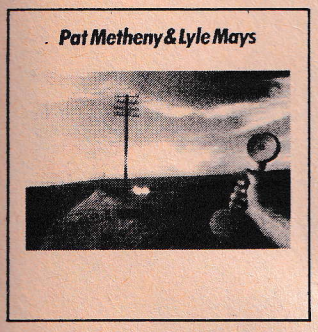
Most Disappointing Album
1. Rolling Stones, *Tattoo You*
2. AC/DC,
For Those About To Rock
3. Van Halen, *Fair Warning*

VIEW READERS' POLL

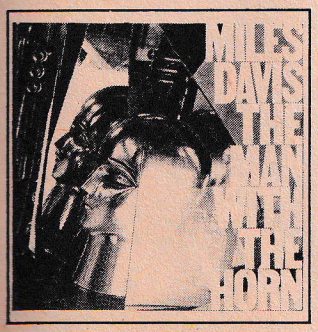
JAZZ

Best Albums
1. Grover Washington, *Winelight*

2. Pat Metheny, *As Falls Wichita*



3. Miles Davis, *The Man With The Horn*



4. DiMeola/McLaughlin/ DeLucia, *Friday Night in San Francisco*

5. Arthur Blythe, *Blythe Spirit*

Best Reissue Albums
1. *The George Benson Collection*
2. Lee Morgan, *Tom Cat*

Best Composition
1. Bill Withers, *Just the Two of Us*

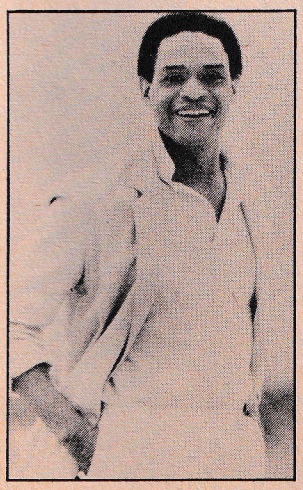
Best Composer-Arranger
1. Chick Corea

2. Joe Zawinul
3. Pat Metheny

Artists of the Year
1. Pat Metheny
2. Grover Washington Jr.
3. Miles Davis
4. Jack DeJohnette
5. Chick Corea

Best Groups
1. Weather Report
2. Manhattan Transfer
3. Spyro Gyra

Male Vocalist
1. Al Jarreau



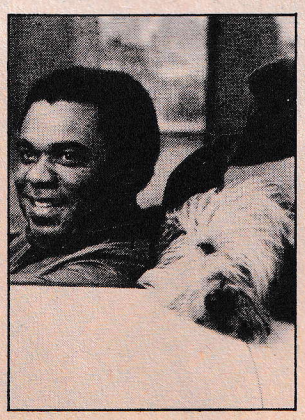
2. George Benson

Female Vocalist
1. Sarah Vaughan
2. Ella Fitzgerald

Reeds
1. Grover Washington Jr.

2. Sonny Rollins
3. Phil Woods
4. Wayne Shorter
5. David Sanborn

Trumpet
1. Freddie Hubbard



2. Miles Davis

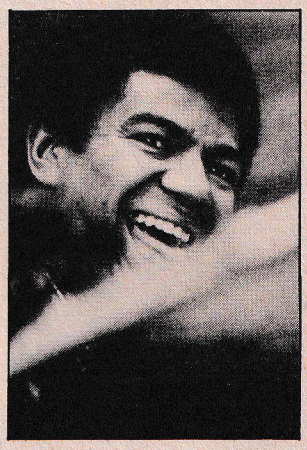
Trombones
1. Bill Watrous
2. Jimmy Knepper

Guitar
1. Al DiMeola
2. Pat Metheny
3. John McLaughlin
4. Joe Pass

Keyboards
1. Chick Corea
2. Joe Zawinul
3. Lyle Mays

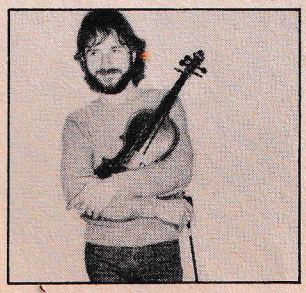
Bass
1. Stanley Clarke
2. Jaco Pastorius
3. Percy Heath

Drums
1. Jack DeJohnette



2. Tony Williams
3. Max Roach

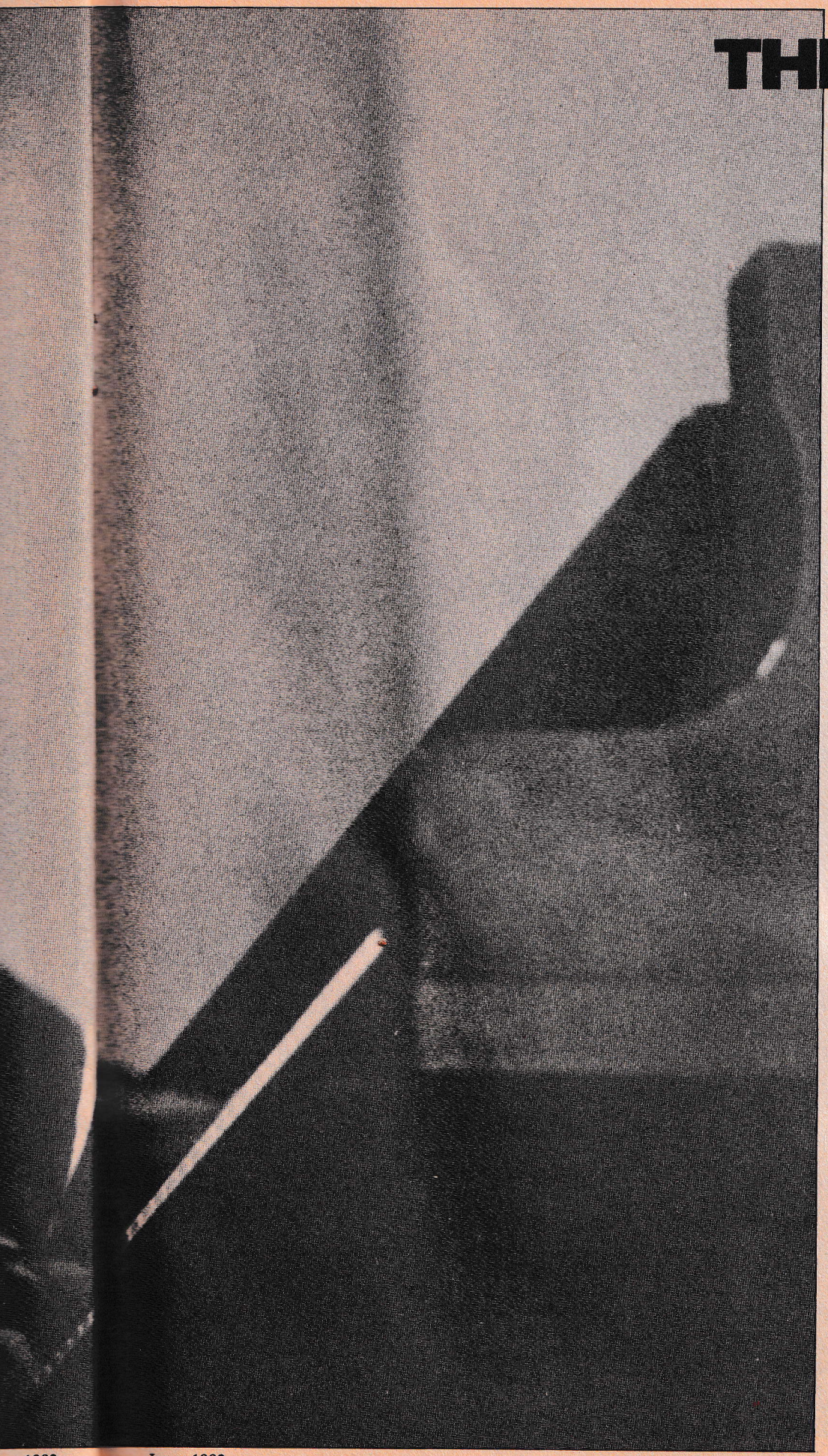
Misc. Instruments
1. Jean Luc Ponty, violin



2. Toots Thielemans, harmonica

Most Disappointing Album
1. Miles Davis, *The Man with the Horn*

Most Disappointing Artist
1. Herbie Hancock
2. Stanley Clarke
3. Lenny White



THELONIOUS MONK

By Scott Yanow

As this article went to press, the sad news of Thelonious Monk's death reached us. This jazz immortal died of a stroke at the age of 61 on Feb. 17, 1982. He will be sorely missed, all originals are. Thankfully he will continue to influence future generations, for Monk's music will live through his recordings forever.

"I say play your own way. Don't play what the public wants—you play what you want and let the public pick up what you are doing—even if it does take them fifteen, twenty years." (From *Jazz: A Quarterly of American Music*)

"Monk is an excellent example of a nonconformist in a field that is very cliquish and conformist, despite the legend that every jazzman is an individualist."—Pianist-composer Hall Overton.

Thelonious Sphere Monk's music was originally so far ahead of his contemporaries that he was virtually ignored for years. His musical style did not undergo any drastic changes after its formation in the mid-Forties, yet it took until 1957 before he was "discovered." In the years to follow, as if to make up for past oversight, Monk received a great deal of publicity, climaxing in a cover story for *Time Magazine* in 1964. Monk had reached his creative peak early, and then waited for the rest of the world to catch up.

What is it about Thelonious Monk that is so different? His compositions and his basic piano style utilize surprising dissonances and unorthodox chords, making much use of space and silence, with a subtle sense of accent and time, emphasizing the musical worth of each note. Never forgetting the blues tradition or lacking a sense of humor, Monk had the ability to endlessly find variations on even the simplest ideas.

For instance, on "Bags' Groove" (available on Miles Davis' *Tallest Trees*, Prestige 24012) most pianists of this era (1954) would fill the blues changes with multi-note runs, blue notes, quotes from other songs, and bop cliches. In contrast, Monk established a feeling of tranquility by repeating a two-note phrase for most of a chorus, but then shattered the mood

with a third seemingly out-of-place but ultimately logical note. He repeats this phrase throughout his solo, expanding it, giving chords to each note, and building to a climax until the tension is released at the end. Not what one would expect on a blues, but Monk never played the expected.

Thelonious Monk was born on October 10, 1920 in North Carolina, and grew up in New York City where he lived most of his life. After a short stint on the trumpet, Thelonious taught himself the piano, with only a few formal lessons when he was 11. A few years later he was in local bands, performing at the Apollo Theatre's weekly amateur night, and playing Harlem rent parties.

At 17, Monk toured the country as part of a rhythm-and-blues style band accompanying an evangelist. Legendary pianist Mary Lou Williams heard Monk during this period and remembered: "He was playing the same style, to a large extent, that he is now. He told me that he was sick of hearing musicians play the same thing the same way all the time." During a two year period he remained with this group, playing in many churches.

In October, 1940, Thelonious began a gig as part of a house band at Minton's Playhouse that lasted on and off until 1948. Minton's became famous as a jam-session spot for musicians. This was quite significant in the early 'Forties because young jazzmen were engaging in melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic experimentation. Many musicians were bored with the increasingly stereotyped melodies and chord changes of the big bands, so these jam sessions helped the progress of a new form of jazz: bebop.

Monk recalled of Minton's: "It was always crowded there, people enjoying themselves all the time. What I was doing was just the way I was thinking. I wasn't thinking about trying to change the course of jazz. I was just trying to play something that sounded good."

A small number of these sessions happened to be recorded. On *Charlie Christian* (Everest FS-219) one can hear Monk taking short solos on "From Swing to Bop" and "Stompin' at the Savoy," revealing an unremarkable style greatly influenced by Teddy Wilson.

But Thelonious' playing would change drastically within the next few years. Partly as a way to discourage incompetent musicians from sitting in and partly as a natural evolution of his music, Monk began incorporating aggressive dissonances into his playing. Paradoxically his music seemed simple, for he used fewer notes and played more melodically than the bebop pianists. But he had his own harmonic structure, his chords were voiced in a personal way and his accents were totally unpredictable in their timing.

During the 'Forties, Monk worked very infrequently outside of Minton's. Tenor-saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, one of the few to recognize his talent, remembered: "One of the worst things I went through in those days was with Monk. I used to get it every night. 'Why don't you get a piano player,' and 'what's that stuff he's playing?'" (*Jazz Masters of the 'Fifties*, 1965). Monk's first studio sides were in a Hawkins-led quartet from late 1944. Monk's style was now fully formed, as revealed on his chorus solo during "Flying Hawk." These early recordings (four songs in all) are available on Coleman Hawkins' *The Hawk Flies* (Milestone M-47015).

Miles Davis recalled: "If I hadn't met Monk shortly after I first came to New York around 1945, I wouldn't have advanced as quickly as some say I did. He showed me voicings and progressions and

I remember Charlie Parker would take me down to listen to Monk all the time and make me sit in with him."

Thelonious' first recordings as a leader were with Blue Note, and his first six sessions have been reissued on *The Complete Genius* (BN-LA579-H2-0798). Of the 29 songs recorded (with two alternates) during the 1947-52 period, 22 were written by Monk and they reveal a full unique body of work. Monk was one of few jazz composers whose melodies, rather than serving as a launching pad for soloists, are meant to be expanded on and explored. Many of the pieces on this set later became standards, such as "In Walked Bud," "Off Minor," "Ruby My Dear," "Well You Needn't," "Straight No Chaser," and "Epistrophy." Thelonious, in settings ranging from a trio to a sextet, performs brilliantly. *The Complete Genius* is the essential Monk record, it reveals a genius in full bloom.

However, at the time of their original release, few shared this view. The big jazz news of the day were debates over whether bebop was jazz. Since Monk's music was a step beyond bop, his work was virtually ignored. Thelonious himself, because of his introverted personality, his appearance (beard and dark sunglasses), and his complex music, was viewed by the jazz press as an eccentric. He received more publicity about his choice of hats than about his music.

Leonard Feather wrote about Monk in his 1949 book *Inside Bebop*: "Monk's place in the jazz scene, according to most musicians in the bop movement, has been grossly distorted, as a result of some high-powered publicity work. He has written a few attractive tunes, but his lack of technique and continuity prevented him from accomplishing much as a pianist... It cannot be too strongly emphasized, for the benefit of those who hear him in person or on records, that he is not a bebop pianist, nor do his solos have any of the mystic qualities attributed to them by some non-musical admirers."

Monk was being damned by many critics in the 'Forties because he did not play in the same style as his contemporaries. He was accused of lacking technique because he did not mechanically shoot out scores of notes during his solos. It would be another decade before Monk's music would finally be accepted on its own terms as good music as opposed to "good bop."

One of the very few writers who understood Monk's creativity at this time was Paul Bacon, who in 1948 wrote in *The Record Changer:* "He plays riffs that are older than Bunk Johnson—but they don't sound the same; his beat is familiar but he does something strange there, too...He may play for a space in nothing but smooth phrases and then suddenly jump on a part and repeat it with an intensity beyond description. His left hand is not constant—it wanders shrewdly around, sometimes powerfully on the beat, usually increasing it in variety and occasionally silent...And Monk has a beat like the ocean waves—no matter how sudden, spasmodic, or obscure his little inventions, he rocks irresistible on..."

Views like this were in the minority. Although in the early 'Fifties it was conceded grudgingly that Monk wrote interesting melodies (one of which, "Round Midnight," was considered a classic), most musicians and critics felt that Monk greatly lacked technique because he did not play an excessive number of notes. Soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy said years later: "If technique in jazz is the art of making sense, then he's got more technique than anybody...He can get more varied colors, sounds, rhythms and shapes out of the piano than anybody I know." (*Jazz Masters of the 'Fifties*, 1965)

During the first half of the 'Fifties, Monk rarely could find work. Since his one interest in life was music, this was a painful period. His wife Nellie remembered: "During those long stretches when he wasn't working, it was torture for him not to be able to play. But you'd never know it from looking at him, and he never got bitter. Anybody else with less strength would have snapped. And he was con-

tinually omitted from things—records, concerts, and the like. We'd listen to the all-night Birdland radio show, and maybe once in two months they'd play a record of his." (*The Jazz Life,* 1962)

Thelonious Monk (Prestige PR-24006), a 2-Lp set, consists of nearly all of Monk's recordings from the 1952-4 period. There are 12 trio sides including the original versions of Monk's compositions "Little Rootie Tootie," "Trinkle Tinkle" and "Bemsha Swing." A quintet session with tenor-saxophonist Frank Foster and trumpeter Ray Copeland has its hot moments, particularly "Hackensack," but the highpoint for this set are the three selections with tenor-saxophonist Sonny Rollins and French-horn stylist Julius Watkins. The numbers, particularly "Friday the 13th," work very well because Rollins and Watkins understood Monk's music. Rather than simply improvising on the chord changes, Rollins and Watkins take apart the melody, stretching it and building upon its structure. But most players still looked down upon Monk because he was different, despite that fact that their heroes (Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie) were also quite different musically from what preceded them.

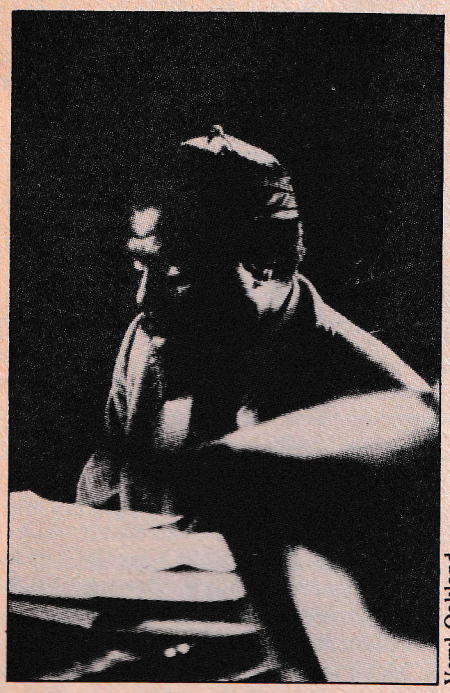
Thelonious always had trouble finding musicians to play his music. Since his compositions were more advanced than bebop, Shihab, a saxophonist who recorded with Monk back in 1947, recalled: "I had a part that was unbelievably difficult. I complained to Monk. His only answer was 'You a musician? You got a union card? Play it!' To my surprise, I eventually did."

Thelonious Monk's career changed for the better when he signed with Riverside Records in 1955. Suddenly he began recording regularly, and in 1957 the jazz public took notice of him. That year John Coltrane, on a hiatus between stints with Miles Davis, joined Monk's quartet for six months.

Playing six nights a week at the Five Spot in New York City, Coltrane's rapid development as a soloist was helped greatly by his association with Monk. "I once saw John with Monk, and I think he learned an incredible amount of harmonic background from him...His concept of space alone was one of the important things he taught Coltrane; when to lay out and let somebody else fill up that space, or just leave the space open."—McCoy Tyner.

"He gave me complete freedom in my playing, and no one ever did that before." —John Coltrane.

All of the recordings that Coltrane made with Monk are on the 2-Lp set *Monk/Trane* (Milestone-47011). Sadly no live recordings exist of the classic quartet, but there are three studio cuts by this group, and several by larger combos that included Coltrane and Coleman Hawkins. All of the compositions, save a blues, are by Monk and the quality is consistently high, particularly the quartet sides. This record fully displays Monk's place in the evolution of jazz: As one of the major transition figures (along with bassist Charlie Mingus) between bebop and free jazz.



Veryl Oakland

"He was sick of hearing musicians play the same thing the same way all the time."

—Mary Lou Williams

All of Monk's Riverside recordings are gradually being reissued by Milestone. *Brilliance* (Milestone M-47023) features Monk in quintets with tenor-saxophonist Sonny Rollins, drummer Max Roach and cornetist Thad Jones among others. *In Person* (Milestone M-47033), reviewed extensively in RECORD REVIEW Vol. I, No. 1, includes Monk's first big band concert and a sextet performance from 1960.

One of Monk's most exciting units was his 1958 quartet that starred tenor-saxophonist Johnny Griffin. Griffin always seems to possess a special affinity with Monk's music, considering it a great challenge. On *At the Five Spot* (Milestone M-47043), a superb live 2-Lp set, Griffin and Monk are at their best, showing great creativity and humor while inspiring each other. Bassist Ahmed Abdul-Malik and drummer Roy Haynes offer stellar support and also have several short solos. Recommended.

In 1959 Charlie Rouse joined Monk's quartet on tenor-sax, and would remain for nearly a decade. Rouse, a hard-bop soloist with a knack for handling even the trickiest Monk composition, said of his tenor style: "Somebody's always saying I was influenced by this or that guy, but they never mentioned the guy who really influenced me—Ben Webster. I dug his sound so, the warm sound he got on ballads." (*Downbeat*, May 25, 1961)

Thelonious signed with Columbia in the early 'Sixties, and made numerous albums with his quartet. For those listeners who would be content with just one album of Monk's 'Sixties work, *Monk's Greatest Hits* (Columbia CS-9775) features long versions of some of Monk's better known pieces. Other fine albums include *Straight No Chaser* (CS-9541), *Monk's Dream* (CS-8765) and *Underground* (CS-9632). Special note should be made of *It's Monk's Time* (CS-8984), especially for those familiar with more traditional jazz. Three of the six pieces are standards from the 'Thirties, and one ("Stuffy Turkey") is a Coleman Hawkins line, but listen to how modern Monk's stride passages are! Fortunately, most of Monk's Columbia Lps are selling on Columbia's $4.98 label these days, so it is a good time to explore these fine records.

In 1971 Monk toured with the all-star Giants of Jazz, appearing on a 2-Lp set under that name (Atlantic SD 2-905) along with Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Stitt, playing bop standards. On Nov. 15, 1971, Thelonious cut two excellent trio albums, *Something In Blue*, (Black Lion BL-152) and *The Man I Love* (Black Lion BL-197), with bassist Al McKibbon and drummer Art Blakely. After that time Monk was silent, not making any further recordings and not appearing in concert after the mid-Seventies. This is unfortunate for those jazz listeners who never received the chance to see this colorful master perform, and rather sad for the jazz world, which has missed his presence. presence.

"Monk'll do what he wants to no matter where he is. Sometimes, if the mood hits him, he'll jump up from the piano and dance—right there on the stand. He just digs what's going on so much he feels like dancing. But he's always listening, make no mistake...He's kind of out of society. I guess it's because Monk is creative. He's not concerned with the people. He does what he feels."

Jazz Shorts

Paul Andersen, Gerald Laurence, Scott Yanow

Native Son / *Coast to Coast/Live in the USA*
MCA 5286

Some of the best fusion music these days is coming out of Japan, and one of their best bands is Native Son. An electrified, hard-driving sextet, they have more energy than the majority of American bands. And energy is the name of the game in fusion (along with good tunes, players, etc.). Tight.

B p.a.

Bunny Berigan / *The Complete, Vol. 1*
RCA AXM2-5584

Berigan, along with Roy Eldridge, was the premiere swing trumpeter. His 1937-9 big band was not a great one (despite young Georgie Auld's tenor) but it served as a fine backing for Berigan's dazzling solos. From 1937, this first of 3 volumes includes 31 sides, including Bunny's famous "I Can't Get Started." A perfect set.

A s.y.

Charlie Byrd & Bud Shank / *Brazilville*
Concord Picante CJP-173

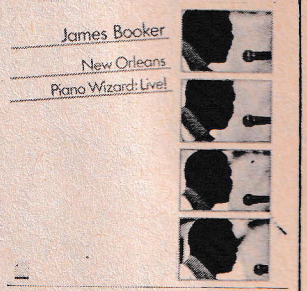
Two musicians who were instrumental in bringing bossa nova to American audiences back in the '60s get together for the very first time to update and capture the magic that is Brazilian music. Shank sticks to alto sax this time out. Maybe volume two can feature his flute. Regardless, although this union should have been made 20 years ago, better late than never.

B+ p.a.

James Booker / *New Orleans Piano Wizard Live*
Rounder 2027

This fine rhythm and blues pianist-singer is well featured on live solo 1977 set. Tunes range from swing to soul standards with Booker's piano work of high interest throughout.

A- s.y.



Gallery / *Gallery*
ECM 1-1206

A splinter group of the late, lamented Double Image led by David Samuels on vibes and marimba and Michael DiPasqua on drums and percussion, Gallery has a soothing sound, helped in part by David Darling's cello and Paul McCandless's horns. Also features Ratzo Harris on bass. A noteworthy opening, and a welcome addition to the ECM stable.

A- p.a.

Dewey Redman / *Soundsigns*
Galaxy GXY-5130

Recorded back in 1978, *Soundsigns* consists of four long pieces, two of which feature two basses (Charlie Haden and Mark Helias). The other two have a more normal instrumentation (tenor, piano, bass and drums). All four are good listening and offer something new. What more can you ask for?

B p.a.

Cohn/Hamilton/Tate / *Tour De Force*
Concord CJ-172

A Kansas City-style jam session with the 3 tenors battling on six tunes. In addition, there are features for each of the saxophonists and one apiece for pianist McKenna and guitarist Collins. Tate takes the honors but the others are close. As good as one would expect, an exciting Lp.

A- s.y.

Lennie Niehaus / *Shades of Dring*
Cambria C-1016

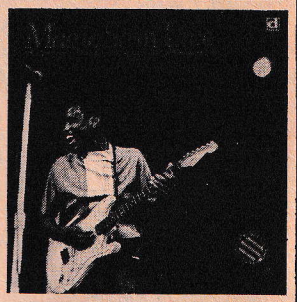
The classical themes of Madelaine Dring are here given jazz arrangements by Niehaus and improvised on by a top-notch quintet. Light melodic music often utilizing two flutes, a bit brief in time and sometimes overly cute. Nice if not very substantial music.

B- s.y.

Magic Sam / *Live*
Delmark DL-645/646

Here is a very significant 2-Lp set: live recordings of the late great electric blues guitarist and singer Magic Sam, from a small Chicago club (1963-4) and the Ann Arbor Blues Festival (1969). Sound quality is a bit rough but the magical music more than compensates.

A s.y.



Phil Bodner & Co. / *Fine & Dandy*
Stash (Box 390, Brooklyn, NY 11215)
ST 214

Ten impeccable, swinging performances of jazz standards by clarinet smoothie Bodner and some giants (like bassist George Duvivier and drummer Mel Lewis). Caught live and very, very well, thank you.

B+ g.l.

Recoil / *Pardon My Fantasy*
Pausa 7117

If Pat Metheny had been a pianist, he would have been born Pat Coil. A Missourian who spent time with Woody Herman after leaving North Texas State, Coil has put together a band that sounds so much like Metheny's it is downright eerie. They sound good, though.

B- p.a.

Tania Maria / *Taurus*
Concord Picante CJP-175

It's only her second American album, but *Taurus* firmly establishes Tania Maria as the Latin force to watch in the '80s. You may not always understand the language she sings in, but the message is always clear: the lady is hot!

A- p.a.

Pepper/Klemmer/Griffin/Henderson
Ballads by Four
Galaxy GXY-5133

In 1978 these four saxmen, backed by a Stanley Cowell-led trio, all took a ballad apiece. Best are Pepper's "Over the Rainbow" and especially Klemmer's roaring "God Bless the Child," but all four shine.

A- s.y.

Zoot Sims / *I Wish I Were Twins*
Pablo 2310-868

With the exception of "Georgia," Zoot performs lesser known numbers on this album. There are more ballads here than usual. Not many surprises outside of the repertoire but Sims and pianist Jimmy Rowles always play well.

B s.y.

Art Pepper / *One September Afternoon*
Galaxy GXY-5141

More than any other alto sax artist, Art Pepper can caress and attack a melody at the same instant. His wound-up-tight, throaty cries are sensually exciting in a primal way. Pepper proudly launches himself into his solos with careless abandon and stylish grace. Backed by Stanley Cowell, Howard Roberts, Cecil McBee and Carl Burnett, Pepper pops royally.

A g.l.

Michael Franks / *Objects of Desire*
Warner Brothers BSK-3648

This year's model has the same sound, but the tunes on the whole are stronger and more memorable than before. Franks works a turf that has equal parts pop and breezy jazz, one that can easily become a rut. He manages to stay out of the rut for the most part. Could be his biggest hit album since the early days.

B p.a.

Dave Frishberg / *The Dave Frishberg Songbook, Vol. 1*
OmniSound Jazz N-1040

Dave Frishberg can't sing, but we should all be so lucky to sing as well as he can't. His voice, which climbs out of his windpipe by way of his nose, is just perfect to express his crafty, cunning and cool lyrics. His piano accompaniment (with Steve Gilmore's bass and Bill Goodwin's drums) is hip and hep.

A g.l.

Roland Vazquez / *Feel Your Dream*
Headfirst HF-9710

This is the second album by drummer Roland Vazquez, and it continues in the same vein as the first one: wonderful hooks, great tunes and a spunky Latin/jazz feel. The emphasis is more on the songs and arrangements than on the soloists, though there are some heavyweights here. Nothing is wasted, everything in its place. Splendid.

A p.a.

Bobby Shew Sextet / *Play Song*
Jazz Hounds JHR 0002

Trumpeter Bobby Shew's best album to date. The six compositions (5 are originals, 3 by keyboardist Mays) are all memorable and the solos by Shew, Mays and reedman Gordon Brisker fit perfectly. Very creative modern mainstream jazz.

A s.y.

Toshiko Mariano / *Toshiko Mariano Quartet*
Jazz Man JAZ-8000

This candid reissue from 1960 features some of altoist Charlie Mariano's strongest recorded solos and offers an early look at Toshiko's Bud Powellish piano and her masterful writing talents. Timeless music, recommended.

A s.y.

Lester Bowie / *The Great Pretender*
ECM-1-1209

Loose-jointed jams of a very high caliber. Music that moves your mind. A gospel revival meetin' flavor squirts through the hard avant-garde sounds; meanwhile, off-the-wall humor bounds in, dances around, then exits, blasted offstage by Donald Smith's furious organ or Bowie's blatent, potent trumpet wails. Excellent, but not for the faint-hearted.

A- g.l.

Wynton Marsalis / *Wynton Marsalis*
Columbia FC 37574

Marsalis has come a long way in a short time. The brightest new trumpeter to emerge in jazz in many a year, he is a recent graduate of the Art Blakey Institute of Timeless Music. He's learned his lessons well, and can be counted on to keep it straight ahead. An auspicious debut.

A- p.a.

Dan Siegel / *Oasis*
Inner City IC 1134

Some pleasant lightweight fusion from keyboardist Siegal and his octet. Catchy tunes, nice crisp solos, plenty of melody choruses. No big deal.

C+ s.y.

Mel Lewis / *Live in Montreux*
Pausa 7115

Featuring only the compositions of Herbie Hancock as arranged by Bob Mintzer, this set is a departure for the Lewis band. Needless to say that there is a unity of purpose. The band is finally getting out from under the shadow of Thad Jones—they are moving ahead splendidly.

B p.a.

Charles Mingus / *Mingus*
Jazz Man JAZ 5002

Classic 1960 Mingus. First a 20-minute jam session with an all-star cast (including Dolphy, McPherson, Ervin, Curson and Knepper). Then an original ballad, the intense "Lock 'Em Up," and finally a quartet version of "Stormy Weather" that is highlighted by the famous Dolphy-Mingus bass clarinet-bass "conversation."

A s.y.

Dave LeFebvre Band / *Oasis*
Inner City IC 1134

LeFebvre's compositions, arrangements and reed work spark this Lp. It's a relaxed session of modern originals played by a talented septet. The music ranges from light funk and bossa nova to a 7/4 groove.

B s.y.

Larry Carlton / *Sleepwalk*
Warner Bros. BSK 3635

An appropriately titled album. Carlton's lazy guitar playing (even on the two uptempo pieces) could put anyone to sleep. Where's the fire that he's shown in the past? The title cut is a hit; buy the 45 if you like but skip this album.

D- s.y.

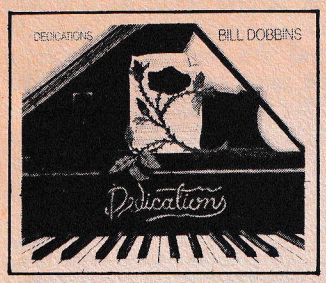
Tony Rice Unit / *Still Inside*
Rounder 0150

A self-proclaimed "spacegrass" group; essentially a bluegrass guitar-mandolin-violin-bass quartet playing original swinging jazz. Rice is an outstanding acoustic guitarist, one who deserves more recognition. A different form of fusion.

B+ s.y.

Jazz Recent Releases

Paul Andersen, Gerald Laurence, Scott Yanow



Piano Solos Times Three

Cedar Walton
Piano Solos
Clean Cuts (Box 16264, Balt., MD 21210) CC 704
Bill Dobbins
Dedications
OmniSound Jazz
Dr. John
Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack
Clean Cuts CC 704

Oh me, oh my, what I need is a quartet. After hearing back-to-back-to-back piano solo albums, even pretty good ones, the ear longs for some sax, bass, and drums. Still, there are joys in the grooves of these three Lp's.

Cedar Walton's touch is extraordinary. On *Piano Solos*, he touches the listener's soul with five beautiful originals and the Arlen-Harburg classic "Over The Rainbow" (done here as a loving tribute to Harold Arlen's chord changes).

Revealing a Tatum-like tendency at times, Walton engages in a gentle wash-of-sound approach on most tracks. That he can mix these two styles is no mean feat, and, despite leaving himself open to the charge that his playing is almost too "pretty," he has produced a pleasingly introspective record.

Bill Dobbins takes the outgoing approach. He does some stride piano, a bit of bebop, a little Ellington, etc., all of it quite tasty and inventive. The best track is his reworking of Charlie Parker's "Yardbird Suite," called "Yardbird Conversation" here.

The real surprise of this bunch is *Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack*. Can the funky, soulful, strutting jazz pianist heard here really be the same guy who, in feathers and war paint, sang about being "the *gris gris* man" back in the 1960s? Evidently, the answer is yes.

This Lp is nice clean fun, with the good Doctor matching Mr. Rebennack (they are one and the same person) note for note. Not every track succeeds ("Memories of Professor Longhair," for instance, drags horribly) but in the main this is fine stuff.

—Gerald Laurence

Windham Hill Recent Releases

There's a small independent label, based in Palo Alto, California, that began when a guitar-playing builder contractor made a tape of some of his songs for some friends. One of the four friends made ten copies of the tape and sent them to ten radio stations. Eight added it to their playlists. Alas, a record company was born and today William Ackerman and Windham Hill Records are both flourishing.

Windham Hill is no longer just an outlet for William Ackerman's guitar. They have a growing stable of artists, all of whom are of an acoustic persuasion, though this probably isn't a company policy—it just seems to have happened that way. Some have met with moderate response (guitarist Alex de Grassi, Ackerman, pianist Scott Cossu); one has had a rather large response (pianist George Winston). It seems that Windham Hill is quietly becoming an American version of the European-based ECM label.

The label's flagship album is George Winston's *Autumn* (C-1012). Featuring mood pieces for solo piano, Winston's record has garnered an impressive amount of airplay. His style is closest to the romantic Keith Jarrett, only more commercial. It's the kind of album that people who don't normally buy jazz Lp's would buy. Perfect moonlight music.

Guitarist Alex de Grassi's new record, *Clockwork* (C-1018), is a departure from his previous solo forays. This one utilizes group performances on some tracks, with a sound that is similar to some of Ralph Towner's small group sessions. It also introduces electricity to the Windham Hill label, in the form of a fretless bass and a lyricon.

Michael Hedges' debut release, *Breakfast in the Field* (C-1017), is more along the lines of what Windham Hill is steeped in: solo acoustic folk-based music (though he is joined on some tracks by George Winston and bassist Michael Manning). *Breakfast* features some truly unique voicings for steel-string guitar. Hedges is a guitarist to watch.

Pianist Scott Cossu had a well-received album on the Music is Medicine label in 1980. *Wind Dance* (C-1016) is his debut for the Windham Hill label, and features the strongest push the company has made yet into true ensemble jazz. The chamber jazz line-up features piano, guitar, cello and percussion and the songs have a light, airy, good-time mellow feel to them.

Label founder William Ackerman's new digitally-recorded album is perhaps the best indication of the road Windham Hill is following. *Passage* (C-1014) is a superbly recorded affair that features four solo and four duet pieces (each duet with a different instrument). It's music that could fit in nicely anywhere in the ECM catalog; especially nice are the duets with Darol Anger, the violinist from David Grisman's band, and English hornist Robert Hubbard.

Windham Hill could very well be the next ECM, if that is its goal. But it's probably too Americanized. There's an awful lot of folk roots here.

Ah, America...

—Paul Andersen

Weather Bland, *Rendezvous* Not

Al Dimeola
Electric Rendezvous
Columbia FC 37654

Weather Report
Weather Report
Columbia FC 37616

Weather Report's latest album (simply titled *Weather Report*) is a major disappointment. One cannot fault the superlative rhythm section. Electric bassist Jaco Pastorius, drummer Peter Erskine and percussionist Robert Thomas Jr. lay down several exciting grooves and each of them make special contributions to Weather Report's appealing sound. But very little takes place above the rhythm.

Joe Zawinul creates quite a variety of sounds from his key-

boards but much of what he plays on this record is little more than rhythmic fills. Zawinul is the composer of five of the six cuts, so he must take the blame for their lack of personality. Best is the ballad "Current Affairs" (a feature for Wayne Shorter's lovely tone on the tenor) and the dramatic piece "Speechless," but both fail to develop. Zawinul's other compositions, the three part "N.Y.C.;" "Dara Factor One" and "Dara Factor Two" are mostly unfinished rhythm tracks. The melodies are much weaker than the rhythms.

And what about the "co-leader" Wayne Shorter? Other than his spot on "Current Affairs," he fails to impress at all. There's a little bit of heat generated on his lone composition "Pipeline," but the rhythm section far overshadows Shorter's playing. A group the caliber of Weather Report, widely acclaimed as the top fusion group of the past decade, is capable of putting out much better music than the contents of their unsatisfactory new album.

On the other hand, guitar master Al DiMeola lives up to his rave notices on *Electric Rendezvous*. In the past this writer criticized DiMeola for sometimes shooting out rapid notes without expressing much emotion. But during his past three albums, DiMeola has matured quite a bit as a soloist. He can still play lightning fast, but now there's feeling behind his virtuosity.

Al DiMeola's regular working group is featured on most of *Electric Rendezvous*, and what a fine unit they are: Keyboardist Jan Hammer, bassist Anthony Jackson, drummer Steve Gadd and percussionist Mingo Lewis. This tight combo is perfect for DiMeola; just listen to their work behind the leader on the opening burner "God Bird Chance."

There's plenty of variety on this new Lp. The title cut is practically hard rock, although of the highest nature. The band really grooves on the melodic "Cruisin'" with Hammer and DiMeola trading some exciting fours. The Latinish "Ritmo De La Noche" uses a couple of well-developed themes for improvisation. Both sides of this album end with duet performances: An explosive guitar collaboration between DiMeola and Paco DeLucia on the well-titled "Passion, Grace & Fire," and two short encounters between DiMeola and Hammer on the melancholy "Somalia" and the peaceful "Jewel Inside A Dream." About the only fault to this album are the premature fade-outs on a couple of numbers, particularly "Black Cat Shuffle."

Electric Rendezvous could be called contemporary jazz, instrumental rock or fusion. No matter what it's called, Al DiMeola's latest Lp is a superlative set. Recommended.

—Scott Yanow

Slightly Faded Echoes

Echoes of an Era
Echoes of an Era
Elektra E1-60021

Echoes of an Era is an all-star session that just barely misses. The frustrating thing is that it could have been a perfect gem. Instead it's just the notable debut of a very talented sextet.

The album was the brainchild of drummer Lenny White. It reunites White with former Return to Forever teammates Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke in a decidedly non-fusion rhythm section. To round out the sextet, Lenny enlisted the services of trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, tenor saxist Joe Henderson, and vocalist Chaka Khan.

Wait a minute...Chaka Khan? The voice that helped to define funk in the '70s? Yes, that Chaka Khan. And she does beautifully here on a program of standards (and one original by Corea). In fact, she's the best thing about the album, which is saying a lot considering the musicians involved.

Now, getting back to the main problem. Lenny White, in putting the session together, decided to do everything in one or two takes, to go after that "spontaneous" feeling. And therein lies the main flaw. Even though the tunes are well-known standards for the most part ("Take the A Train," "I Love You Porgy," etc.), the band itself never loosens up, sounding ragged in parts and too forced in others. A little rehearsal could not have hurt anything—the spark still would have been there.

What would be especially nice is if this group got the chance, if possible, to do some live dates. That would give it a chance to come together naturally.

Then Lenny could record it live in a small, dark basement of a club, preferably the last set. That's how I would do it.

—Paul Andersen

The Avant-Garde, Circa 1982

Although receiving minimal publicity (an occasional mention in the jazz press, but almost nonexistent on radio), the jazz avant-garde is alive and well. Some players (such as Arthur Blythe and James "Blood" Ulmer) are even on major labels these days, while the long-time masters of what has been called "the new music" for 20 years at least can draw a crowd at concerts (Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor). Two fairly new jazz labels have done this extremely noncommercial music a valuable service by recording its artists extensively.

Cadence Jazz Records seems to have made it their mission to tape completely obscure musicians. Imagine buying an album featuring the likes of Daunik Lazro, Mark Whitecage, Martin Bues and the leader Saheb Sarbib! Well *UFO-On Tour* (CJR 1008) features these musicians and it's very well organized. "One for Mo" has bassist Sarbib and drummer Bues sounding like Ornette Coleman's early rhythm section while altoists Whitecage and Lazro take long solos on top. "Egypt" naturally has a mid-eastern modal flavor to it but the continually shifting bass patterns change the tempo and the mood several times. "UFO" utilizes spacey sounds, including Sarbib on the shenai horn soloing with the two altos and percussion. "Between C&D" is reminiscent of Mingus, with Sarbib's dancing bass lines constantly challenging the alto players.

Each tune on *UFO* has a purpose, both altoists are monsters on their instruments, and the music builds and flows naturally without losing its direction. The musicians listen closely to each other; now it's our turn to listen to this brilliant album. Highly recommended.

Also highly rated is Saheb Sarbib's Multinational Big Band's *Aisha* (CJR 1010). Sarbib's second album with his rather amazing 20-piece orchestra (including 10 saxes) features a varied program: East 11th Street" utilizes conventional rhythms and advanced harmonies, "One for Lacy" has a pretty waltz melody, "New York Party" is a fascinating look at rockish rhythms and the highpoint of this album (concluding Side One) is a tribute to Albert Ayler, an eccentric march with a changing tempo ("Get In Line") that Ayler would have loved.

Side Two is dominated by the four-part suite "Aisha" which explores several styles, concluding with a happy bouncing melody. The final piece, "The Unknown Step of Life," is an apocalyptic tribute to John Lennon. There are many fine solos on this album from some of the new music's lesser known but finer musicians.

In contrast, Jemeel Moondoc's *New York Live* (CJR 1006) album is an example of an overlong rather self-indulgent display. First the good points: the album jacket has a wonderful shot of altoist Moondoc playing for a trio of cows. And there's no disputing the fact that each of the members of the quartet are superior musicians. But a nearly 20-minute "Salt Peanuts" (which ignores the chord changes) features solos that seem to ramble on and on. "Thanks to the Creator" has an optimistic melody and some nice interplay but even at under eight minutes I found my attention wandering halfway through. The entire second side is taken up by the 25-minute "High Rise," an Ornette-like melody without chord changes for the marathon solos. The most interesting aspect here is vocalist Ellen Christi who, using her voice like a saxophone, gets a variety of interesting sounds and screams. But overall *New York Live* did not move this listener.

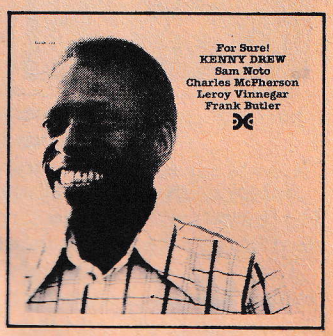
Hat Hut Records has released albums by virtually unknown European artists, but the two records reviewed here are led by more famous players, Sun Ra and Anthony Braxton. Keyboardist-composer Ra has led his Arkestra for nearly 30 years, playing very advanced music since the 'Fifties. *Sunrise In Different Dimensions* (Hat Hut 2R17), a 2-Lp set, is a nearly definitive look at Ra's music. Absent are the exotic philosophy, chants and word games that occasionally dominate Ra's concerts; in fact there is only one brief throwaway vocal here. Rarely recorded before and a major highlight of this set are the swing and bop charts that the Arkestra often plays in concert. Using the innovations of the past few decades in these performances, the Arkestra really tears into the swing tunes.

Among the highpoints of this package: (1.) Sun Ra's brilliant piano improvisations, whether playing inside, outside, or both together. (2.) Altoist Marshall Allen's dramatic solo on "Cocktails for Two" and his lengthy, screaming cadenza on "Silhouettes of the Shadow World." (3.) John Gilmore's tenorwork on "Round Midnight" (although his clarinet playing is erratic). (4.) Every note played by trumpeter Michael Ray (the only brass player on this date), whether playing free or recreating Bobby Stark and Red Allen solos on a crazy "King Porter Stomp." The main weakness to this live 1980 concert is the drumming on the older tunes. Either Chris Henderson or Eric Walker finds it necessary to make up for the absence of a string bass by hitting their bass drum on the first beat of every bar, thereby hindering the Arkestra's ability to swing. That's why this otherwise outstanding set is "almost" definitive.

Anthony Braxton's *Performance 9/1/79* (Hat Hut 2R19) features his quartet on seven original compositions. Braxton's front-line partner trombonist Ray Anderson, currently with Barry Altschul, is a young master who constantly inspires Braxton on this often complicated music. This is a truly virtuosic quartet with Braxton, Anderson, bassist John Lindley and percussionist Thurman Baker often thinking as one on these unpredictable compositions. Except for one piece when they switch to alternate instruments, the reed-trombone-bass-drums instrumentation stays constant with Braxton alternating between alto, soprano and clarinet. Rather than giving the reader a play-by-play recap (impossible anyway), let me conclude by starting that this 2-Lp set consists of dynamic, stirring solos and outstanding group interplay that is complex but not inaccessible for the open-eared listener. And don't miss the closing march. Recommended.

—Scott Yannow

Independent Bop Labels



Throughout jazz history it has often been the independent record companies that have documented much of the important music. Sometimes the small labels (like Savoy and Dial in the 'Forties or ESP and BYG in the 'Sixties) are several steps ahead of the major companies in recording the new music of the younger musicians. But also quite often it is up to the independent companies to chart the older forms of jazz that may be currently out of style, and to document the talents of the underrated, often forgotten players. Many independent companies today are recording bop and new releases from some of the better labels are covered here, those of Xanadu, Muse, Progressive, and RealTime.

Xanadu has during the past decade been an extremely consistent and high-quality bop label. There have been no big band sessions for this company, no attempts at commercialism or even highly arranged sessions. The emphasis has always been on individual expression within the small group bop framework. Recently five albums have been issued by Xanadu with Kenny Drew's *For Sure!* (Xanadu 167) being a fine example of this label's music. Drew's quintet performs six original compositions (four by Drew) with plenty of solos from trumpeter Sam Noto (in particularly good form), altoist Charles McPherson, pianist Drew and drummer Frank Butler, while bassist Leroy Vinnegar is content to walk. Much of the music could have been written in 1947 (such as "Blues Wail" and "Context") yet it is far from a pale imitation of that era's music. Each player is at his best and this album is often quite stirring.

The same can be said about two very different albums: Dolo Coker's *All Alone* (Xanadu 178) and Bob Mover's *In the True Tradition* (Xanadu 187). Coker's solo record is a real sleeper. One might not expect much from yet another solo bop piano album but Coker's melodic originals (along with two ballads) are given very thoughtful improvisations that relate closely the themes. All the tunes are taken at relaxed tempos with Coker's subtle yet emotional solos growing in interest with each listen. An album that can easily be overlooked but once listened to will not be quickly forgotten. Altoist Mover is not as subtle on his album, just intensely creative. He has become a strong voice on his instrument, a far cry from his early days when he sounded like a Lee Konitz duplicate. Backed just by bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Bobby Ward, Mover extends the boundaries of bop, always swinging but explorative. Reid and Ward make significant contributions to the program of two ballads, two jazz standards (Monk's "Evidence" is a high point), a blues and Mover's multi-tempoed "Night Dance of Little People." Challenging, often exciting music.

Perhaps because of the superlative quality of these Xanadu albums, *Xanadu In Africa* (Xanadu 180) seems more ordinary in comparison. Although the location is unusual, the music played by the quintet (tenors Al Cohn and Billy Mitchell, Coker, Vinnegar, and Butler) consists of five rather routine standards. Side two is composed of two long ballads and a bass-dominated blues. Not a weak album really, but not special despite some hot moments from Billy Mitchell.

Xanadu occasionally reissues music from the past and *Bebop Revisited, Vol. 3* (Xanadu 172) is full of minor gems from the 1951-53 period when the West Coast "cool" influence was at its

strongest. First are four selections from the Kai Winding-Warne Marsh quintet. Two vocals from Melvin Moore are of limited interest but the solos of trombonist Winding and particularly Marsh's tenor are often outstanding. Then comes a previously unissued date featuring a lot of obscure musicians. When was the last time anyone listened to Phil Urso's tenor or Tony Fruscella's trumpet? Yet this is an excellent date, with arrangements from pianist Bill Triglia (where is he now?) that are reminiscent of the Miles Davis Nonet, leaving room for many fine solos. Side two focuses on Sam Most's flute and clarinet in quartet and sextet settings. Some of the highlights include Most's humming on the flute (he was the first) on the 1953 "I Hear a Rhapsody," the surprisingly expert piano work of Bob Dorough, and Most's virtuosic clarinet workout on "Notes to You." Although not a classic album, *Bebop Revisited, Vol. 3* will give pleasure to all who own it.

Muse Records is generally a more adventurous label than Xanadu, recording everything from blues to avant-garde. However bop is also their main foundation. Altoist Richie Cole is about as talented as they come in this music, and he's as hot as usual on *Cool "C"* (Muse MR 5245). Backed by a big band composed of Japanese musicians, Cole stomps through the medium-tempo tunes (like "Back to Bop") and shakes the blues out of the ballads. His alto playing sounds so effortless (and his tenor work on "Green Dolphin Street" is not too disgraceful either) that it would be no surprise if many listeners become motivated to learn the saxophone, just from listening to Cole's albums. Pianist Himiko Kikuchi is quite helpful in support.

Cole also stars on vocalist Mark Murphy's *Bop for Kerouac* (Muse MR 525), Murphy's tribute to the beat poet Jack Kerouac. The classic bop tunes, a couple of modern ballads, the timely lyrics and two brief readings from Kerouac's books (recited over the music) perfectly capture the era of the Beat Generation, even with the inclusion of an electric piano on a few numbers. Kerouac would appreciate this album yet those not familiar with his writings will have no real problem relating to this fine record.

Ricky Ford's *Tenor for the Times* (Muse MR 5250) is of greater interest for Ford's seven original compositions than for any of the solos. The originals are uniformly excellent, particularly "Saxaceous Serenade" and the happy "Christmas Cheer," but throughout Ford sounds during his solos as if he were holding back, being careful not to cross an imaginary line. His tenor sound is quite appealing; if only he had dug into these tunes with the intensity he has shown on past albums. Albert Dailey contributes several fine piano solos and trumpeter Jack Walrath joins the quartet for a sensitive statement on "Portrait of Love." Not a bad album, *Tenor for the Times* does not quite live up to its potential.

Another one of the best independent bop-oriented labbels during the past few years is Progressive Records, based out of Tifton, Georgia. This company seems to favor tenormen and pianists as reflected in the seven albums reviewed here. Recent releases from Arnett Cobb and Sonny Stitt rate favorably with their previous recordings. Cobb's *Funky Butt* (Progressive 7054) is a typical date for the honking and swinging veteran tenor-saxophonist. In a solid quartet that features pianist Derek Smith, Cobb sounds strong on a variety of blues, stomps and ballads. Like Cobb, Sonny Stitt has not changed his style in 30 years, just improved it. Stitt has led literally hundreds of dates but *Sonny Stitt Meets Sadik Hakim* (Progressive 7034) is better than most. Stitt splits time equally between tenor and alto on six standards and two blues, sounding a bit inspired. Surprisingly, pianist Sadik Hakim (known in the 'Forties as Argonne Thornton) displays none of the unique style he once possessed. In fact, his brief solos lack much of a personality. But bassist Buster Williams is impressive and Stitt sounds good here.

Most highly recommended is *Presenting Harold Ashby* (Progressive 7040). Ashby, best known for his stint with one of Ellington's last orchestras, is an outstanding if over looked

tenor stylist whose playing is based out of Ben Webster. He is in top form on this Lp whether playing ballads like "Candy" and "Over the Rainbow" or stomping through a blues. Since he has not recorded much, this 1978 date is essential.

Better known than Ashby is Flip Phillips, veteran of Woody Herman's First Herd. Flip's latest Lp *Flipenstein* (Progressive 7063) has the gimmick of "monstrous" titles (like "Satin Takes a Holiday," "Ghost of a Chance" and "Ghoul of My Dreams") and a rather outrageous drawing on its cover, but the music is quite straightforward. Mostly conventional music, with the exception of the spacey "Vampire's Dream," Flip's tenor and Lou Stein's piano both are well featured and in prime form. The original compositions, particularly Stein's "Dracula's Dance" and Phillips' "The Claw" are excellent. A fine Lp.

Three of Progressive's newest albums feature piano trios. Derek Smith, who is practically the house pianist of this label, plays well if unspectacularly on *Derek Smith Plays Jerome Kern* (Progressive 7055). I'd like to hear him on a more diverse, perhaps less laid-back set. On the other hand, *The Explosive Dorothy Donegan* (Progressive 7056) lives up to its title on this generally hard-driving album. Donegan's style at times is reminiscent of Bud Powell at his most intense, Brubeck and even Erroll Garner. Bassist Jerome Hunter and drummer Ray Mosca are complementary to this often-dazzling pianist. Also quite worthy is *The Magnificent Tommy Flanagan* (Progressive 7059). Pianist Flanagan, bassist George Mraz and drummer Al Foster form a well-integrated tasteful trio on these eight superior yet not overly played standards. There has yet to be an inferior album released by Progressive, a label that deserves more recognition.

In the brief history of RealTime Records, this hi-fidelity company has already released two gems (*The John Dentz Reunion Band*, RT-304 and Freddie Hubbard's *Back to Birdland*, RT-305). Of the three albums covered here (all digital recordings), the closest to perfection is Don Menza's *Burnin'* (RT-301). Menza assembled a very talented orchestra that includes 13-15 top horn players. Some of the soloists are altoist Joe Romano, pianist Frank Strazzeri, trumpeters Bobby Shew and Don Rader, and of course Menza on tenor. However, despite top individual moments, the arrangements are what makes this Lp special. Four of the six compositions are Menza's, including the five-way trumpet battle "Dizzyland," the complex "Tonawanda Fats" and Don Rader's feature "New Spanish Boots." Well played, very well recorded, recommended even at the high price tag.

The other two RealTime Lp's will only appeal to some listeners. Pianist Joe Marino, who plays solo on *28 All Time Greatest Hits* (RT-302), is a high-quality cocktail pianist who ably performs medleys featuring the music of four top composers (Carmichael, Gershwin, Rodgers and Ellington). Taken on its own terms, this is pleasant, melodic piano music. Of more interest is trumpeter Jack Sheldon's *Playin' It Straight* (RT-303). His septet of top studio musicians perform bop standards and ballads quite competently. Sheldon and pianist Alan Broadbent sound good but tenor-saxophonist Pete Christlieb has the best moments. Not essential but swinging.

However, it *is* essential for the jazz listener to investigate these underpublicized independent labels. As this review implies, there are loads of treasures to be found.

—Scott Yanow

Rock Shorts

Leonard Pitts Jr., Gerald Laurence, David M. Gotz

Chaz Jankel / *Questionnaire*
A&M SP6-4885

Continuing his love for the funky groove, former Blockhead Jankel's second release is an uneven but very danceable affair. Though several lyrics have been contributed by Ian Dury, this record remains in a shadow of the days when Jankel and Dury made homogeneous music.

B- d.m.g.

Brian Briggs / *Combat Zone*
Bearsville BRK 3627

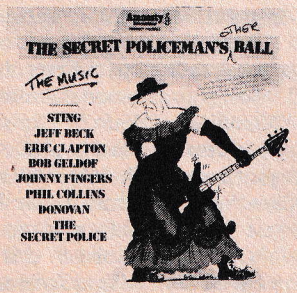
Imagine combining the studio science of Todd Rundgren, the acid-psycho pyrotechnics of The Chambers Brothers, and a dash of the quirky spark of Jimi Hendrix. You might have an absolutely phenomenal album like *Combat Zone*. Briggs (who is also super producer John Holbrook) is outstanding.

A g.l.

Japan / *Japan*
Virgin-Epic ARE-37914

Japan presents a complex blend of poly-rhythms and flowing synthesizer sculptures. Crowning this structure are the sinuous and mesmerizing vocals of David Silvain. They make very moving music, music for listeners. While this is only their first Lp in America (culled from their fourth and fifth in England), it will undoubtably cause a stir.

B+ d.m.g.



The Secret Policeman's Other Ball
Island ILPS 9698

The successor to last year's ball features three duets between former Yardbirds Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck; plus performances by Sting, Bob Geldorf & Johnny Fingers, Phil Collins, and—for the old-timers—Donovan, plus a 9-minute version of "I Shall Be Released," featuring Clapton, Beck, Sting, and a cast of dozens. The benefit show's good vibes help a lot here, and you're able to focus on the songs (in the case of Geldorf, Sting and Collins) in a near-naked state. Good show.

A- t.e.

Smokey Robinson / *Yes It's You, Lady*
Tamla 6001TL

Mr. Smooth-as-Silk has been to the top of the charts with startling regularity lately, but it's been a while since he came up with an album that was top-quality from first cut to last. The new Lp, in that context, is better than its predecessors. The production is notably richer and more varied than on previous outings (husky saxes, jazzy keyboards) and breathes new life into an artist who, with a quarter-century in the business, must always beware of falling into predictability.

B+ l.p.j.

The Scratch Band
MCA MCA-5300

Don't be dissuaded by the fact that this group is country singer Don Williams' back-up band; they aren't nearly as comatose as he often appears. Nor, to be fair, do they rock out like Bob Seger or Trooper. What this album *is* is a group of well-produced, well-played demos of songs that deserve to be heard in a variety of treatments ranging from country to pop to soul. Leader Danny Flowers' earlier credits include "Before Believing" from Emmylou Harris' first Warner Bros. Lp, and the Williams/Eric Clapton (depending on which station you listen to) classic, "Tulsa Time."

B t.e.

Prism / *Small Change*
Capitol ST-12184

With the radio success of "Don't Let Him Know," Prism seems launched on a good career. Happily, this Carter-produced album is also worthy of airplay, particularly the languid "Turn on Your Radar." Pleasant sounds.

B+ g.l.

Dwight Twilley / *Scuba Divers*
EMI America ST-17064

Little that's new here from Twilley. His voice is still buried in echo and it seems that he is constantly falling in love. Surely rock 'n' roll can be more exciting than this.

C- d.m.g.

Eye To Eye / *Eye To Eye*
Warner Brothers BSK-3570

This is mellow new wave from an unusual duo. Comprised of a delicate-voiced woman and her keyboardist, Eye To Eye is assisted here by Jeff Porcaro, Rick Derringer, and other seasoned professionals. A very polished debut, but it lacks real passion.

C d.m.g.

Huey Lewis and The News / *Picture This*
Chrysalis CHR 1340

Kind of a Pablo-Cruise-meets-J.-Geils sort of sound, but with a nifty undercurrent of new wave anger. Seems to work for necking (at low volume) as well as for zooming down the highway (at screaming levels).

B+ g.l.

Aldo Nova / *Aldo Nova*
Portrait ARR 37488

Foreigner, Journey, Styx, Starship, Boston, Rush are all here. And yet Aldo finds room for himself—an admirable debut.

B+ d.m.g.

Teresa Straley / *Never Enough*
Alfa AAB-11013

Artistically somewhere between Joan Jett and Juice Newton, Straley postures as a tough adult. With an L.A. club background, she's a talented songwriter (or at least collaborator) and sings with—at her best—an appealing, hands-on-hips aggressiveness. All of the songs are new originals; doesn't she know any good old ones?

B- t.e.

Rock Recent Releases

Jon Sutherland, Leonard Pitts Jr., Gerald Laurence, David M. Gotz

Grand Rock Reborn

Asia
Asia
Geffen GHS-2008

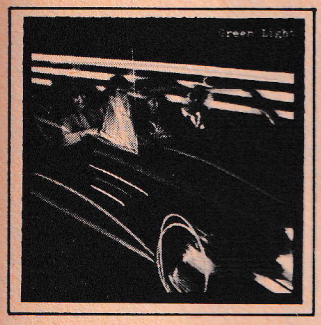
It all began with King Crimson's *Court of the Crimson King* in 1969. Then we got Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Genesis and Yes, bringing the grand-rock style to its height. Quickly this music of complexity and bloated technique faded. Punk music's energy and pop music's lightness took the youth to a new place, where concise is nice.

Asia attempts to update grand-rock, with a certain amount of success. Not surprisingly, the group is comprised of grand-rock's finest: Steve Howe of Yes on guitar, Carl Palmer of ELP on drums, John Wetton bassist with King Crimson, U.K., Roxy Music and others, and Geoff Downes, member of the last Yes band and The Buggles on keyboards. So these men have blended the grand-rock tradition of dramatic instrumentation with light pop-song melodies and hooks. The result is a slightly manufactured sound, which is pleasing yet sometimes pretentious.

The most striking aspect of this album is the strength of John Wetton's vocals. Although he sounds incredibly like Greg Lake, he shows that he is a very fine singer. Equally strong is the predictably provocative guitar splendor of Steve Howe. Palmer is as flashy as ever, but he still provides effortless rhythmic support. While Downes, being the least-known member, adds some very fine and imaginative synthesizer accompaniment, but he remains primarily in the background.

The songs are about half pedestrian and predictable, with the verses plodding along and the choruses (hooks) providing the only stimulation. There are several tunes which feature excellent instrumental interplay and rich vocal harmonies (another tribute to Wetton). Overall this is a very professional debut, and it will please many who were raised on grand-rock. You can be sure that this band will tour with a show that will have all the trappings of the grand-rock tradition. It wouldn't be a surprise if they threw in some hits from their former incarnations too, so look out for that.

—David M. Gotz



Bonnie's Passion Prevails

Bonnie Raitt
Green Light
Warner Bros. BSK 3630

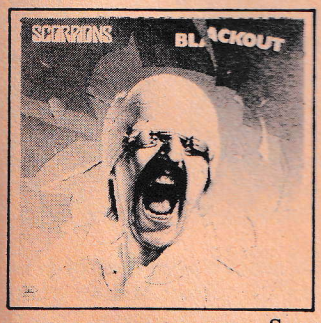
It doesn't matter what type of instrumental accompaniment Bonnie Raitt uses, her smokey vocals always come through. Her slowly rocking, sultry voice is always distinctive, plaintive, knowing, and teasing. So when she assembles a band as tight as this one, it's a joy.

Both "River of Tears" and "I Can't Help Myself" get Stones-style treatments. Ian McLagan adds some synth bass grooves on "Can't Get Enough" that push this reggae-tinted blues into the nether regions of your cranium. Raitt's snake-like slide guitar playing infuses "Willya Wontcha" with passion and power, while Ray Chara's bass chuggs with subtle oomph. And Dylan's little-known "Let's Keep It Between Us" is propelled nicely by William Smith's smooth blues organ.

In other words, these guys came to play, and producer Rob Fraboni put the package together in a masterly fashion. There are some truly great moments—"Me and the Boys" contains a delicious vocal refrain on the title line that's the kind of thing you find yourself yodelling over and over in the shower. Plus, "Baby Come Back" has noodling, echo-effect lead guitar lines that you'd give your eyeteeth to have played first.

Here's a robust 35-minute dose of sexy intensity. . .that leaves you wanting more.

—Gerald Laurence



Scorpions' Sting is Sure

Scorpions
Blackout
PolyGram SRM-1-4039

It's been two years since the Scorpions came over to lay Kraut Metal on willing headbangers and the matter has come to pass with *Blackout*. It's a bruiser that picks up two steps ahead of where Animal Magneticism left off. The Scorpions have always been better at creating melodies than their most direct metal cult band competition (i.e., Iron Maiden, Saxon, Def Leppard). The band has the ability to mesh melody and metal with the best. It's difficult to predict the success of this album and its ability to test time but from the initial first few listenings there is no doubt in my mind that this album is a killer. How this album, so much better than many already good Scorpion albums, can't end up as one of the great heavy metal albums, I don't know, because *I* think it is.

—Jon Sutherland

As the Ad Says...

UFO
Mechanix
Chrysalis CHR 1360

Mechanix uses saxophones to augment an already aggressive rhythm guitar attack.

Saxophones? On a UFO album?

Sure, they fit in nicely, just like the female backup singers.

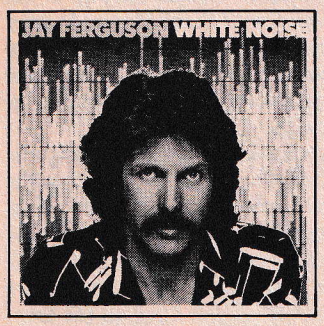
The female backup singers!? Geez, I knew things would change when Michael Schenker left, but next you'll be telling me they added strings.

Well, as a matter of fact...But don't worry, the heavy metal magic of "You'll Get Love," "The Writer," and several others assures you *Mechanix* will, as the ad says, "tighten your nuts."

This is a stone cold killer Lp. The softer touches remain just that—dabs of pastel coloring which serve only to emphasize the potent phases of a decidedly rough 'n' ready pallette.

The boys (now a quintet) have come through with more melodious monster music to thrill all us rock junkies. If this stuff doesn't roll you, you need a tune-up.

—Gerald Laurence



Jay Bounces Back

Jay Ferguson
White Noise
Capitol ST-12196

Ferguson's new album is one of the happier surprises of the year so far. The songs' lyrics are for the most part intelligent (though hardly intellectual), and occasionally downright witty. The Beatles-ishness of the melodies and arrangements isn't limited to the inclusion of a solid version of "I'm Down"; it extends through much of the material. Headbangers might enjoy the title cut, a rock and roll anthem for this year, with its guitar trio of Ferguson, Joe Walsh and Randy California. Hea-vee!

His recent series of collaborations with veteran songwriter Jackie DeShannon has paid off with three of the album's strongest tracks, though "White Noise," the real standout, he composed himself. A revival of the Equals' 1967 pre-reggae hit "Baby Come Back" doesn't exactly leap out of the grooves, though it's well enough done and good to hear again.

A note about the recorded sound: gimmicked up though it may be, this album sounds sensational.

—Todd Everett

MSG Made It Tasty

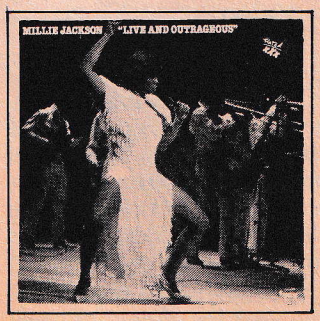
The Michael Schenker Group
One Night At Budokan
(Japanese Import Only) Toshiba EMI WWS-67159.60

Michael Schenker is without question one of the most gifted of all rock guitarists, who like many with his spectacular talent is hard on other members in his bands. MSG is probably history, at least with this current line-up, and that is a fact sad enough to bring tears to the eyes of those headbangers who derive some sexually mystical pleasure from his creamy and speedy licks. *One Night At Budokan* is a compilation from the first two MSG albums already available here in the U.S. plus a heady version of "Doctor Doctor" which put UFO on the map in the early 'Seventies.

From a purely technical standpoint (in this writer's view) the lead guitar is mixed too far down. The best mix for this band would be if Michael was as loud as the rest of the band put together. Still there is enough meat on these bones to make room in the rack for a night with the enigmatic Schenker and the black and white flying "V" that is his trademark.

Since the status of MSG is still undecided over here, chances are high that this Lp will remain a Japanese import available only with a little patience and a couple of dollars more. (*One Night At Budokan* is available from YSL Records, P.O. Box 8330, Van Nuys, CA 91409. The price is $27.50 per album postpaid.)

—Jon Sutherland



Two New Shades of Soul

Millie Jackson
Live and Outrageous
Spring SP-1-6733

Bettye Lavette
Tell Me A Lie
Motown 6000 ML

I'm not sure of the hows and the whys, but soul music is definitely back again. Recent months have seen folks like Bobby Womack, the Chi-Lites and Aretha returning to the chart tops. Even dance music, after years of disco dilution, is sounding better than ever with the gritty likes of Junior's "Mama Used To Say" and O'Bryan's "The Gigolo" pouring out of sound boxes nationwide.

Bettye Lavette and Millie Jackson are two priestesses of gut-bucket R&B who are riding high on the current revival. Both have product out right now that's worth some attention. Forget all you've heard about the soul men. I love 'em to death, but there ain't nothin' quite like a soul *woman* when she's cranked

up and goin' good.

Lavette's *Tell Me A Lie* is like that. It's a simple ten-song production that pits Lavette's hoarse squalls against a sweet-sounding vocal back-up in the best tradition of Aretha and other squalling soul sisters. "Right In The Middle," for instance, finds that background chorus offering refined, rich vocals on the hook line ("Don't you dare stop there/'Cause I'm right in the middle of fallin' in love"). Then you hear Bettye popping up in that ocean of sound like so much flotsam, sounding wonderfully, gorgeously out of place. Where the choir pleads and caresses, Bettye growls and demands.

That yin/yang tension is what makes most of the rest of *Tell Me A Lie* so immensely listenable. Highlights include the aforementioned track as well as remakes of two Gladys Knight and the Pips oldies, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (certainly the most redone song in the Motown catalogue) and "If I Were Your Woman."

Millie Jackson, on the other hand, is another story. The lady has often been called either the female Richard Pryor or the black Bette Midler, and both descriptions fall short of the mark. Millie Jackson is an original.

Black women have an image—especially among black men—that depicts them as raunchy, bitchy, sexy, cold-eyed heathens—women who wake up with steam shooting from their ears. We know, of course, that the very definition of stereotyping makes it wrong (we do know that, don't we?), and many black women have invested a lot of time in countering that image.

And along comes Millie Jackson. Millie J. revels in being the very epitome of that image, in taing it to the limit and exploring its every nook and cranny. Like Pryor, she'll make you uncomfortable while she does it, but Jackson's sense of humor is so sharp that, nine times out of ten, you'll find yourself laughing your head off, social conscience be damned.

Despite what the foregoing may lead you to believe, Jackson *is* a singer, a lady with a delivery so raging and combustible that you can only think of James Brown. On this live album, as on her studio work, she bridges her songs with long, comedic raps that are the real star of the show.

Don't look to hear any of *Live And Outrageous* on your local radio station, by the way. As usual, the lady is lowdown and unrepeatable as she lashes into white girls (a favorite topic) and "Ugly Men." Also among the highlights is a gutbucket reading of the Commodores' ballad "Still," that comes complete with more than a little country/western flavoring to it.

—Leonard Pitts, Jr.

A Good Tip

The Waitresses
Wasn't Tomorrow Wonderful?
Polydor PD-1-6346

An amusing set of tunes from this L.A.-based band. Seemingly another female group, but only the lead and back-up singers are women. Why they have chosen a feminine name is still a mystery.

Using the blue beat (ska and reggae) with rock 'n' roll, they bop along, while singer Patty Donahue sing-talks about various aspects of life for the fairer sex. It's interesting to note that the songs are written by guitarist Chris Butler, nearly all specifically from a woman's point of view. About half of the songs are fun and interesting, both lyrically and musically, leaving the rest to fill in the gaps.

Frequently sounding like early Blondie, but without the aggressiveness, The Waitresses have made a solid debut. On the strength of the songwriting alone, it seems that there could be a long career ahead for these newcomers.

—David M. Gotz

Hagar Holds His Ground

Sammy Hagar
Standing Hampton
Geffen Records GHS 2006

Somebody out there must still believe that Sammy Hagar is going to be a star. After leaving Montrose, Hagar has strung out a line of Lps that have some bright moments but nothing to separate from the middle-rock hoard. Quite a capable stage performer, Hagar is always a couple of songs short of having a major hit. *Standing Hampton* is cliche-ridden, especially "There's Only One Way To Rock," and is another treadmill album for Hagar. He's really going nowhere and his style is nondescript enough to leave him waiting in the wings of stardom. It's too bad really because Sammy can really belt it out when he has to and it's obvious that he's going to stick with it.

—Jon Sutherland

Accentuate the Positive, Please

Simon and Garfunkel
The Concert in Central Park
Warner Bros. 2BSK 3654

If you're a diehard fan, buy it. All others, save your money for another album. Any other album.

Why in heaven's name would five hundred thousand people come to hear this stuff, even if it was free? Yes, it is true that Paul Simon writes beautiful melodies. But he's got one of the wimpiest voices this side of a talking doll, and the lack of rehearsal evident in the missed notes and uneasy tempi is embarrassing.

Getting poor results from normally proficient backup performers isn't easy, but bassist Anthony Jackson is here reduced to the kind of thudding you expect from a country barn pickup band.

Simon even screws up such a sure-fire song as "Mabellene"—it's put on the tag end of a sloggy-slow version of "Kodachrome," and it reveals Simon's misunderstanding of the idioms of rock. He actually puts horns into the thing.

Art Garfunkel tries to rise above the mess with his clear tones, but it's a losing battle. Whatever positive force he brings to the S&G live act is far outweighed by Simon's negatives.

—Gerald Laurence

A New Slice of Nick

Nick Lowe
Nick the Knife
Columbia FC 37932

Nick Lowe's album debut as a post-Rockpile solo artist is more likely to appeal to fans of his early band, Brinsley Schwartz (are there any of us still out here?) than to Rockpile's; though he jumps from rock and roll genre to genre easier than a starlet switches boyfriends, the overall emphasis here is distinctly on the soft side. Dave Edmunds, it comes as no real surprise, was the rocker in the pile. Though Edmunds lacks neither quality, Lowe did provide much of the wit and sophistication in Rockpile; both are evident throughout *Nick the Knife*, ranging from the gag label through the arcane reference to Solomon and Sheba.

The personnel heard here include many names familiar to Lowe fans. The old band provides guitarist Billy Bremner and drummer Terry Williams; Elvis Costello's Attractions lent keyboardist Steve Nieve; and ex-Squeeze Paul Carrack, who's touring with Lowe, and Nick's wife, Carlene Carter, also appeal. Ex Ducks-Deluxe and Martin (Rumour) Belmont, too. No information is provided as to who's heard where, though it probably doesn't matter all that much (certainly not to Lowe!); this is the headliner's album, with sidemen just that. Subordinate.

Twelve songs on the album; another plus, even when you consider that he redid a relative oldie, "Heart," from Rockpile's *Seconds of Pleasure*.

—Todd Everett

A Sly Attack of Angels

Angel City
Night Attack
Epic Records ARE 37702

It was my pleasure to do Doc Nesson's first U.S. interview upon the release of the first Angel City (*Angels in Australia*) Lp. He was jet-lagged, sleepy, different, and very interesting. Now he blazes green lasers from his eyes with brothers Brewster on guitar. Upon first listening I was put off and now I can't get the vinyl off the turntable. Hook City, mate. "Take A Long Line" still takes the top of the list, but "City Out of Control" is climbing.

Coming across as an AC/DC-ish new wave band can be a hard handicap to overcome but Nesson is probably slick enough to pull it off. Angel City's *Night Attack* is a creeper...it's gonna creep up on ya.

—Jon Sutherland

Bad News Re: Ozzy...

Dear Editor:

For the last couple of issues you have been publishing letters from fans telling you how much they like Ozzy Osbourne. I had planned to write a letter to you in the same vein, but on January 26th something happened that changed my mind.

I went to see Ozzy in Champaign expecting to see a great show. The band opened up with "Over the Mountain", Ozzy sang the first three words and then collapsed backwards. About seven people carried Ozzy off the stage as the band finished the song and then got off. Soon after that a man announced that Ozzy was very sick and was on the way to the hospital. After one and a half months of anticipation, the show was over in a minute.

Later that night I heard on the radio that Ozzy's collapse was caused by a bad diet, laryngitis, and the treatment he had been receiving for rabies. I'd heard before the show that Ozzy had bitten the head off a bat a week earlier in Des Moines and contracted rabies, but I thought it was just a dumb rumor, but I was mistaken.

I would appreciate it very much if you would print this letter so I could hear some reactions from other Ozzy fans.

Steve Schoenrock II
Decatur IL 62526

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The Riff is coming! Lexington, Kentucky-based rock publication to debut in May/June. Write Ace, Box 4444, Lexington KY 40544, with input, info about Lexington bands.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF A MADMAN 8x10 color photographs. Intense close-ups of Ozzy Osbourne. Randy Rhodes "Forever". J. Geils, Nugent, Zappa, others. Send $7.50 to: ROCK n ROLL COLLECTABLES, 1646 Stanley Street, New Britain, CT 06053 (no personal checks).

Attention VENTURES fans: The Original Ventures are still making records. For pricing on current LPs and/or a list of all Ventures LPs currently available contact: Walter Stagner, 2126 Eastgate Dr., Sycamore IL 60178. (815) 895-2665.

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